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Daily Report
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Arab-Israeli Talks

'Urayqat Notes 'Tangible Progress' in Cairo Talks

JN2903173795 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1226 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In an effort to follow up the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations in Cairo on redeploying [the Israeli forces] and electing a Palestinian legislative council—negotiations which are now in their second day—Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, Palestinian minister of local government and head of the Palestinian delegation to the Palestinian-Israeli talks in Cairo, told our "Today's Events" program that tangible progress had been made on some points, but that other points were still under discussion. We will hear the following details from Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat in Cairo:

[Begin 'Urayqat recording] In fact, we are trying to work out a joint formula on the makeup of the council. Let me say the following: The basic agreement that took place here yesterday was that there would be no agreement on the elections. Instead, we will have to reach a phased agreement before or during June on the redeployment, the elections, the revision of the laws, the transfer of authorities, and economic issues. In other words, all the election-related matters to be discussed will be part of the phased agreement.

In light of these details, we are now trying to reach a joint formula on the council. Some progress was made. I cannot belittle the importance of yesterday's progress, but I also cannot belittle the outstanding points. We should not be overoptimistic. We have officially agreed to separate the executive and legislative authorities. We also agreed, for example, on the right of all our Palestinian people to participate in the elections regardless of their ideological and political affiliations. Many powers will be shared by the president, who will be elected directly by the Palestinian people in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza, and the council's members. These powers have almost been worked out. As you know, the Declaration of Principles, which was signed in Oslo, stipulates the election of a council. But the issue of the direct election of the president of the authority took much time before agreement was reached.

As I have said, I do not belittle the outstanding or the disputed issues. Despite agreement on setting up council subcommittees to follow up executive activity, we have not yet agreed on the number. We also still disagree over Jerusalem. We call for the right of participation, which means voting and candidacy, while the Israeli delegation says that participation means voting only. As I have said, the Jerusalem-related issues are very important. We hope that we can overcome them during this round or the second round of negotiations. Brother Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] and brother Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'] told me that discussion centered on this issue. Israel proposed that Jerusalem residents take part in the voting. This is contained in the U.S. letter of assurances. But, the Palestinian delegation was so firm that the issue turned from the right to vote to the right to participate in the elections, which means that the Jerusalem residents will take part in the elections through voting and candidacy. We hope that we can positively overcome this issue.

We are not facing many problems regarding international supervision. We have named the states which the Palestinian side will invite to supervise the elections. We will also invite the EU to take part in efforts to prepare for elections on the ground. The United States, Russia, Norway, Canada, Japan, Egypt, and Jordan will also be invited. But some issues have a tripartite nature, which are the ones we are now discussing. The supervisors who will come here via Israeli airports or ports will need to be transported from these airports and ports. These issues, particularly the logistical issues or those of a tripartite nature, are being discussed. We, however, agreed that the elections are Palestinian domestic affairs.

The invitations will be extended by Palestinians, and the cards to be carried by the international supervisors will be issued by the Palestinian Authority. We, as a Palestinian Authority, also have certain criteria for the international supervisors because we, in the final analysis, want fair and free elections. We want the whole world to know that our Palestinian people have held the first free and fair elections in the Middle East. As I have said, the president of the authority will be elected. Every Palestinian aged 35 years or above will have the right to candidacy and to elect 100 council members, as we have proposed. We also want the world to draw up its criteria and come to supervise and monitor how fair and free these elections will be. [end recording]

13th Round of Talks Ends

NC2903175995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1656 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 29 Mar (MENA)—The 13th round of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, dealing with Palestinian legislative elections in the West Bank and Gaza, ended in Cairo this afternoon.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat announced that no agreement was reached during this round on the participation of Jerusalem residents in the elections or on the number of the proposed legislative council's members. He pointed out, however, that the difficulty involved in the overlapping of the Palestinian Authority chairman's executive and legislative powers with those of the legislative council has been resolved. He explained that agreement was reached to separate the powers and in future there will be no officials exercising legislative and executive powers at the same time.

'Urayqat added that during today's five-hour session, lengthy discussions were held over all the clauses pertaining to the makeup of the proposed council. He said he hopes that the Israeli delegation will bring back clear

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answers to the still unresolved issues, including the composition of the legislative council, during the next round of negotiations on 10 and 11 April.

Dr. 'Urayqat reported that a meeting of the Palestinian-Israeli Security Affairs Committee was held in Tel Aviv yesterday, under the chairmanship of Palestinian Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya and Israeli General Uzi Dayan, to discuss the redeployment of Israeli forces in the West Bank.

'Urayqat explained that the agreement that must be finalized is the proposed interim agreement, not only an agreement on elections. He explained that the negotiations on the elections must run parallel with the talks on redeployment.

'Urayqat warned that the Gaza-Jericho partial agreement will not endure more than it already has and that Israel must implement the Oslo Agreement that it signed.

He remarked that the Israeli officials' statements that Jerusalem is Israel's capital contradicts the agreement reached with the Palestinians that the city's permanent status should be left to the final status negotiations after two years. He noted that the Declaration of Principles tackled all the issues.

'Urayqat declared that the only possible response to the current violence and counterviolence is to restore the Palestinian people's rights. He said that you cannot have an equation involving peace and settlements at the same time. He explained that peace does not merely involve signing agreements but carrying out an actual Israeli withdrawal.

Chief Israeli negotiator Yo'el Singer stated that the two delegations are working hard to reach an agreement and are continuing their negotiations over the unresolved issues.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 24 Mar

NC2903125295

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 24 March edition of the Arabic-language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Report Examines "New" U.S. Strategy
2. Protesters Against Israel's Fair Presence Arrested
3. Writer Urges Ownership of Deterrent Power, National Economic Strategy

REPORT EXAMINES "NEW" U.S. STRATEGY

A 2,000-word report by Mahmud Bakri on page 2 discusses the "new U.S. strategy" and its ultimate objectives. He notes that U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry visited the region twice in under three months and that the second visit focused on extending the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and ways to confront the Islamic movements and the regimes that pose a threat to U.S. interests.

Bakri maintains that U.S. policy in this connection revolves around two axes: "Coordination with NATO to confront the Islamic movements in north Africa, south of the Mediterranean, and finding ways to face Iraq and Iran through a policy of dual or separate containment."

Stating that Perry's talks in the Gulf states sought to "establish an Arab-American axis to stand up to potential threats, particularly those expected from Islamists," Bakri refers to "intensive Israeli-U.S. consultations" to coordinate action in this context. He says that Israel seized the opportunity of NATO's declaration of determination to face Islamic movements in the region and tried to persuade the United States to approve joint maneuvers between NATO and Israel. He says that Israel defined several concepts that govern cooperation in this regard, stressing that it should be the "basic power in the showdown with the fundamentalists." He explains that this means arming Israel with NATO's sophisticated weapons. He adds that the second concept Israel defined was that "fundamentalist violence should be confronted in phases, starting with major groups in south Lebanon and within Israel."

Pointing out that Israel failed to persuade Arab states to participate in joint maneuvers with it, he says that the main objective of the Israeli-U.S. maneuvers that went on in the Negev Desert was to "undertake a joint U.S.-Israeli operation against fundamentalist groups." He maintains that the maneuvers sought to "carry out limited operations against specific groups, chase violent groups in over one state, undertake organized joint action to arrest some fundamentalist leaders, and get to the sources of fundamentalist groups in the region by limiting the capabilities of the states that support them." He adds that the strategic cooperation between Israel and the United States seeks "to start the chain of security cooperation between Israel and Arab states."

Bakri states that the U.S.-Israeli maneuvers sought "to set up joint military teams capable of dealing directly with armed groups." He maintains that the participation of naval units in the maneuvers was meant to facilitate "Israel's infiltration, through the U.S. 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean, of some Arab countries that might provide a center for violence."

The writer claims that the United States has developed a "new strategy to deal with Iraq and Iran" by "containing each individually." In Iran's case, the strategy calls for "tight political, economic, and military isolation in the region" by preventing Iran from developing its relations with Arab states. He refers here to American concern over "attempts to revive contacts between Iran and Egypt." The strategy also involves efforts to persuade the

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world to stop all military contacts with Iran, within the context of "constricting the Iranian nuclear project," Bakri says.

As for Iraq, the strategy aims to "eliminate Saddam Husayn's regime" and bring in people who build "ties of confidence and respect with the Americans," he says. He adds that the strategy stresses the need to encourage domestic disturbances, establish contacts with potential candidates who would take power, maintain sanctions, maintain the tension in Iraq's relations with Gulf states, and trigger tension in its ties with Syria and Egypt, bring Jordan closer to Gulf states to preclude a Jordanian-Iraqi rapprochement, and keep the file of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction open.

Bakri points out that the U.S. strategy seeks to "contain differences with moderate regional states, including Egypt, and strengthen these states to play their role in determining the future of the region" within the framework of a chain that includes Egypt, Jordan, and Israel.

PROTESTERS AGAINST ISRAEL'S FAIR PRESENCE ARRESTED

A 500-word report by Tariq 'Abd-al-Hamid on pages 1 and 6 says the security authorities took several measures to obstruct the march planned to be held at the industrial fair "to protest Israel's participation in the fair."

According to the report the authorities arrested members of the "Popular Movement on Fighting Zionism and Resisting Normalization" and summoned others for interrogation. The movement decided to keep an open session in the Nasirite Party headquarters until its members are released, the report says.

The report adds that the authorities arrested nine students at 'Ayn Shams University during a demonstration to protest Israel's participation in the fair and a Knesset delegation's visit to the People's Assembly. The Central Security Forces' armed men surrounded the university and used tear gas against students, the report says, noting that eight students were injured.

WRITER URGES OWNERSHIP OF DETERRENT POWER, NATIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

In his 4,000-word article, Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn reiterates his position on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, NPT, and criticizes the regime for "the decision actually made to go back on the previously declared hardline position." He reiterates that "facing the Israeli nuclear threat can only be done when Arabs and Muslims have the suitable deterrent."

Husayn points out that the "advisory committee" set up to determine Egypt's position on the NPT extension is made up exclusively of experts in international law and relations and that it involves no technological or military experts. He adds that most of its members are "accustomed to listening to the decisionmaker and obeying his orders" and that they do not take initiatives. He is surprised that the president "refrained from meeting party leaders and intellectuals when this serious challenge was being considered."

Husayn believes that the Arab and Muslim nation should own "an unconventional power to scare and deter God's enemies." He adds that this power should not necessarily be owned by Egypt. If we are being monitored closely in some way, whoever can escape observation is demanded to seek to own that power, he says. He notes in this context that the U.S. and Zionist threats against Iran concern all, as much as Iraq's calamity affected all.

The writer states that the difficulties facing Egypt in the nuclear field do not justify its negligence of the other aspects of the Arab, Islamic power. "The rulers should have sought to develop a national strategy to build a strong economy," he says, adding that they could have persuaded international parties to accept that strategy "in return for what we gave up in the field of armaments."

'Adil Husayn believes that Egypt did not receive a "generous reward" for its role in the Gulf war. On the contrary, he believes that some policies were forced on it to destroy its agricultural and industrial structures and "to sell our projects cheaply to foreigners and Zionists."

Touching on "international pressures" on the Egyptian Government to implement the agreements it signed with the IMF, Husayn talks about "the planned reduction of tourism revenue," the reduction of U.S. aid, and the IMF demand to devalue the Egyptian pound. He adds that U.S. Vice President Al Gore came to Cairo "to assist the IMF in exerting pressure and to make more impudent demands."

Husayn reviews the economic situation, noting that GNP growth rates are still lower than the rate of population growth. He refers to the drop in the wheat and cotton crops and states that the industrial sector's share of GNP "does not exceed 16 percent." He points out that after all the facilities granted to foreign capital, and rather than building advanced technologies, "U.S. investors limited their contributions to hamburger, McDonalds, and ice cream industries." He also refers to the unemployment of 10 percent of Egyptian manpower.

'Adil Husayn affirms that the "Labor Party categorically rejects the programs of the international institutions (which are backed by the United States and Israel), because they destroy the economy rather than reform it."

He says that the foreign scheme to weaken Egypt and subjugate it has many ramifications, noting that 50 prominent economists study the Egyptian economy at the international organizations and "determine its course."

Turning to Al Gore's visit and the agreements signed, he notes that what was published about these agreements was "very vague and clearly dangerous." He believes that the vagueness engulfing the agreements implies that

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"they are not of a technical nature, but certainly have to do with general policies related to the plans involving the region and to Israel's role and the future of its relations with Egypt."

Reiterating his demand to encourage the private sector, Husayn says: "We want a private sector that is affiliated with the Egyptian state and its national development strategy. We do not want a public sector that is associated with U.S. and Zionist companies, or that allies with them to destroy the state and its higher interests."

In conclusion, Husayn demands "an urgent official statement detailing the agreements signed with Al Gore."

Abu-Ghunaymah on MB Challenges, Structure

95AA0123B London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 25 Feb 95 pp 47-48, 50

[Interview with Ziyad Abu-Ghunaymah, leader of the Muslim Brotherhood organization in Jordan, by Salih Qallab; place and date not given—first three paragraphs are AL-MAJALLAH introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Until about a year ago and before he was dismissed while on a visit to the United States, Ziyad Abu-Ghunaymah was one of the most illustrious Islamic leaders in Jordan. In addition to his long history in the Muslim Brotherhood [MB] organization, he is regarded as one of the founders of the Islamic Action Front party [IAF]. He became a member of its executive and political bureau, a member of the consultative council, and chairman of its central information committee. He also represented the party in contacts and meetings with other parties.

The main reason for Abu-Ghunaymah's dismissal from the MB and the IAF was that he opposed their participation in the recent parliamentary elections. He objected to the method of one vote for one voter. He also was against the attempt to let the IAF play the role of the MB in Jordan and then gradually try to cancel it.

In view of the important role Abu-Ghunaymah played in the MB, since he joined it in 1948 while at the age of 11, and considering that he represented the MB in many international and Arab conferences and is more open than those who are still in the organization, AL-MAJALLAH approached him and held the following interview with him:

[Qallab] You have expressed fear that the IAF was seeking to make the MB subordinate to it. Have these fears ended with your exit and dismissal from the party, or is there a group that still maintains the same opinion?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] Other party members are against this trend. The purpose of my dismissal was to discipline them. The number of party members who maintain the same opinion is constantly increasing. Members are collectively withdrawing from the IAF and returning to the MB.

[Qallab] You maintain that some of the founders of the IAF wanted to cancel the MB. Are there similar attempts taking place in other countries?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] Of course. Certain elements have sought to absorb the MB, cancel its role, and wipe out its jihad history by concentrating on the IAF. The same thing happened in Sudan and Tunisia, where attempts have been made to focus attention on the National Islamic Front [NIF] led by Dr. Hasan al-Turabi and the al-Nahdah Party led by Rached Ghannouchi to end the MB.

[Qallab] Who are behind this trend?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] I think that what is happening in Jordan is part of a broader plan against the MB everywhere. I do not want to say everything now. I will just say that this trend is regrettably being sponsored by a number of groups who were part of the MB organizations. This is clear in Sudan's and Tunisia's case. They think it would be better to establish a broad Islamic movement instead of the MB.

[Qallab] If some elements are seeking to cancel the MB and its role in favor of the IAFP, why have you participated in the establishment of this party from the beginning?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] The idea was that the party would be just a political front for the MB and not to cancel its political role in Jordan. We discovered that there was another trend that sought to cancel the MB and melt it into the IAF. I opposed this trend and published a secret document that I had prepared in this regard. Because of it, I was dismissed.

[Qallab] You have spoken about a plan against the MB in various places. Do you think that the aim is to change the MB from a major integrated world organization into small regional and local organizations?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] This is part of the plan to undermine the MB. Here I would like to say that the MB is one big family, but every branch of this family enjoys full independence.

[Qallab] Has this independence existed from the beginning?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] Yes. The MB group in Jordan is completely independent from the MB in Syria or any other place. It has its own Jordanian leadership and makes its own Jordanian decisions. However, they all sympathize with each other as one family under the umbrella of the so-called world organization that plays the role of the parent.

[Qallab] Does this world organization have a specific center or is it just artificial?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] I think that this organization maintains an artificial leadership rather than a field leadership, because every MB organization in every state is completely independent in the decisions it makes.

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[Qallab] Does this independence include funds?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] I have not learned or heard that the organization in Jordan had received funds from outside and vice versa.

[Qallab] Is there a leadership center for this world organization?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] I know that the MB's general guide represents the world leadership. He is the subject of respect and admiration and is like the patriarch of the family. Everyone turns to him in times of trouble.

[Qallab] Is the relationship with the patriarch of the family of a consultative or committing nature?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] Consultative.

[Qallab] Are the elements trying to cancel the MB in favor of the IAF in Jordan doing so in response to an official desire?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] When the democratic process began in 1989, some reports said that the parties' law, which was being prepared, would be based on the parties law in Egypt and Tunisia that banned religious-based political activity. Therefore, we started looking for a formula that could serve as a political front to fill the vacuum if the MB decided not to engage in public political activity. The MB leaders were convinced that the state does not want them to engage in political activity under the MB's name. So they decided to establish the party. However, when the authority decided not to include a clause in the parties' law that bans religious-based political activity, we had two ideas. The first idea was to disregard the question of establishing a party and continue exercising political activity through the MB, as has been the case since the middle of the forties. The second idea was to establish an Islamic party, besides the MB, to serve as an alternative to the MB and a vessel for independent Islamic figures. We decided to adopt the second idea, and began working to establish the IAF on this basis. We were able to attract important figures and many Sufi and Islamic trends. However, these trends soon split from the party after sensing the MB's intention to dominate them. Later, a secret document by the MB's planning division appeared, containing an explicit proposal to cancel the MB and melt it into the IAF. Disagreement then broke out in the MB. One group supported the proposal, but the majority was against it, insisting that the MB should continue to exist under its name and function politically as it did before. The strange thing is that this document was an original copy of a document that appeared in Sudan in 1969. It contained the same views and suggested canceling the MB organization and melting it into what was called then the Islamic Charter Front, led by Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, and now known as the NIF. The two documents contained the same words and expressions. I should point out here that there was partial success at first in Sudan when a large number of MB members joined the NIF. However, most of them later returned to the parent organization, and the MB reassumed its former organizational position. It has not displayed any opposition to the Islamic experiment in Sudan, because it was interested in its success, regardless of who was leading it.

[Qallab] Was such an attempt made in Egypt?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] No. The organization in Egypt is very strong and structurally sound.

[Qallab] Where such attempts are being made now?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] Such attempts have clearly been made in Sudan, Jordan, and Tunisia through the al-Nahdah Party.

[Qallab] In light of what you are saying, how is the situation now between the MB and the IAF in Jordan?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] I cannot say definitely now. There is, however, a clear phenomenon. The truth is that a major disagreement exists in the MB concerning the party and whether it is necessary to continue this experiment. I can say that MB members are now refraining from joining the IAF. Some members have withdrawn from the MB secretly, because the MB's ethics prevent them from announcing this. What I know and what the IAF's leaders know is that many MB members of this party refuse to cooperate with the party, participate in its activities, and pay their dues. Still, all this is taking place without noise. A large group of MB members no longer views the IAF with satisfaction. These members think that the party is seeking to challenge the MB in Jordan for its historic position in Islamic work. I know that the party's committees are not functioning, its activities are limited, and its tamed opposition is making it lose much of the public's sympathy.

[Qallab] Does the MB regard the Islamist deputies in the Jordanian parliament as its representatives or the representatives of the party, and therefore does it not want to have anything to do with them?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] When I was a member of the Central Committee for Parliamentary Elections, I thought that nomination for these elections should take place in the MB's name and not the IAF's. However, the other members overruled us. Now, these deputies officially represent the party, although their success in the elections was due to their affiliation with the MB.

[Qallab] Is Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] affiliated with the MB? Is it a subordinate of the MB in Egypt or in Jordan?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, is old and new at the same time. It is old because it is an extension of the MB group, which was founded in Palestine in the mid forties. After the 1948 Palestine tragedy, the Hamas organization in the West Bank was linked to the MB in Jordan, while the organization in Gaza was linked to the MB in Egypt.

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[Qallab] Was the MB organization in Palestine separate from the one in Jordan?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] Yes. Each organization was independent of the other, just as it is in Syria, Iraq, and the other Arab countries.

[Qallab] Did the situation remain the same after the 1967 occupation?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] After the 1967 occupation, the West Bank's organization merged with the Gaza organization, and the two became one and completely independent of the MB in Jordan and Egypt.

[Qallab] How was Hamas established?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] I know that the brothers began thinking about an underground militant organization in the early eighties. Efforts continued in secret through the mosques and Koran study schools. Members carried out some harassment operations against the enemy before the resistance movement was launched. Statements were issued about these operations under various names, including al-Murabitun and al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah.

[Qallab] Was this done without the help of the MB in Jordan?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] After 1967, the MB's leadership and organization in Palestine became independent of the MB in Jordan.

[Qallab] But coordination frameworks must have existed?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] Coordination exists regarding aid and moral and media support.

[Qallab] In view of the degree to which the population and geography of Jordan and Palestine are interlaced, can we say that Hamas is closer to the MB in Jordan than to the MB in Egypt?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] The issue is not closer or farther. It is a matter of personal relations. The MB in Palestine once was subordinate to the MB in Jordan. Therefore, sympathetic relations do exist between the MB in Jordan and Hamas, although the two are completely independent in terms of leadership, organization, and other matters.

[Qallab] Everybody talks about the MB's world leadership. Are there any specific organizational or consultative bodies for this world leadership?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] I cannot say whether such bodies exist or not. I do not know. The brothers from all the organizations, however, meet in Islamic conferences and exchange views on some matters. This takes place only on occasions and does not assume an organized form.

[Qallab] Does the supreme guide, Hamid Abu-al-Nasr, have the right to intervene in MB affairs in any place for organizational purposes?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] No, absolutely not. However, he can do so in his capacity as the patriarch of the family. He might intervene to solve a problem. He does not interfere in the internal affairs of the MB organizations in other states. The best example is that he has not intervened in my case, although the problems I faced were because I defended the MB. What I want to say is that our duty is to love him. We appreciate his views on public matters, but he does not interfere in our internal affairs.

[Qallab] Who elects the supreme guide? Is it the MB in Egypt or the brothers in all parts of the world?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] The MB's Consultative Council chooses the supreme guide.

[Qallab] In other words, the supreme guide must be Egyptian, while the MB leaders in other places take the title of supreme overseer [al-muraqib al-'amm]?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] Yes, because the MB in Egypt is the parent movement that offered big sacrifices, and the appeal emanated from Egypt.

[Qallab] Do you have the right to object to the selection of the supreme guide?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] No, absolutely not. We respect the decisions of our brothers in Egypt.

[Qallab] One year after the experiment of the new Jordanian parliament, in which the MB represents the largest organized bloc, do you think the MB has lost or won by participating in the parliamentary elections?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] I said that the MB has not taken a firm and unwavering stand on developments inside and outside Jordan, particularly on the issue of peaceful solutions. It has tried to appease the government. This has affected its credibility among the people and caused confusion inside the organization. I know that some brothers have left the group because of this appeasing and soft position. The differences that have begun to emerge inside the MB have affected the position of the people toward it, as some of the MB's constants have suffered a setback. If the MB continues on this path, its support among the public will decrease day after day. I can say that this public support has indeed decreased, despite some deceptive victories. This demands that we return to our constants and reemphasize our original positions.

[Qallab] You are talking as if the unity of the MB is not so good?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] Whether the MB likes it or not, I say that our ranks have become disorganized. My advice to my brothers is to return to the MB's constants and original firm positions.

[Qallab] Do you not think that the more radical movements, like the ones in Algeria and Egypt, have begun pulling the carpet from under the feet of the MB movement?

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[Abu-Ghunaymah] There is no doubt that people are attracted by the heroic actions of these groups. I personally sympathize with the Islamic groups and the Islamic Salvation Front, although I do not believe in violence and think that what they are doing is in response to official violence.

[Qallab] Does the appearance of these movements mean that the MB's sun has begun to go down?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] I do not think so. I think the MB will survive these trends. This is the conflict that is taking place between us and those who advocate canceling the MB and turning it into several public movements. The MB is the origin and should continue to exist together with a major movement around it.

[Qallab] Does the MB in Egypt support al-Turabi or the MB in Sudan?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] The brothers in Egypt support the MB in Sudan.

[Qallab] Who is the MB's supreme overseer in Sudan?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] He is al-Sadiq 'Abdallah 'Abd-al-Majid. Some of the MB leaders there are al-Habr 'Abd-al-Dayim, Isam al-Bashir, and Dr. Malik Badri.

[Qallab] What about Abu-Naru?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] He was an MB member, but split from the organization because he advocated a more violent position by the Islamists in Sudan. The brothers there have complaints against al-Turabi, because of the shari'ah [Islamic law] and political line he has adopted. However, they think it would not serve any interest to clash with him. On the contrary, they think that they must ensure the success of this experiment.

[Qallab] Regarding al-Zanadani in Yemen, is he a MB member?

[Abu-Ghunaymah] Yes, he is. Attempts have also been made to cancel the MB in Yemen. These attempts, however, have failed, because the group is old-rooted and strong there.

[Box, p 48]

MB's Organizational Structure in Jordan

- The family [al-usrah] is the smallest organizational cell in the MB. It includes between five and seven members and has an official who carries the title of chief [naqib].

- The area [al-mantaqah] includes several families and has an official who carries the title of superintendent [raqib].

- The branch [al-shu'bah] is an elected administrative committee of the area. It is assisted by branch divisions that have several tasks.

- The executive bureau [al-maktab al-tanfidhi] is composed of seven members and is headed by the general supervisor.

- The consultative council [al-majlis al-shura] is composed of 30 members. Its meetings are chaired by the general supervisor. It is considered the highest body of the MB in Jordan.

[Box, p 48]

Permanent and Sole General Supervisor Muhammad 'Abd-al-Rahim Khalifah was chosen as general supervisor of the MB in Jordan in 1952. He continued to serve in this position until 1994. He is the first leader in the MB to hold this title. The first leader 'Abd-al-Latif Abu-Qurah held the title of MB official [mas'ul].

Palestinian Affairs

Dutch Minister 'Secretly' Meets al-Husayni, Others

BR2903125795 Amsterdam DE VOLKSKRANT in Dutch 29 Mar 95 p 4

[Report by Eddo Rosenthal: "Van Mierlo Has Secret Talks with Palestinians in East Jerusalem"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In Jerusalem yesterday afternoon Foreign Minister van Mierlo met secretly with a Palestinian delegation led by Faysal al-Husayni.

The minister had decided to keep the meeting secret to avoid the politically charged event throwing a negative shadow over the three-day state visit by Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus.

Van Mierlo: "I wanted the Palestinian meeting to be as unprovocative as possible for the Israeli hosts." For this reason the conversations took place not at the Palestinian headquarters, the Orient House in East Jerusalem, but at the home of the special Netherlands representative for the Palestinian autonomous regions, who also resides in East Jerusalem.

In recent months the Israeli Government has been trying to prevent foreign ministers from holding political discussions with Palestinian representatives in East Jerusalem. Israel is taking the position that all consultations with Palestinians must take place in Jericho or Gaza, which since May last year have been under the rule of PLO Chairman 'Arafat.

The Palestinians, however, are resisting this position, seeing it as an attempt to uncouple East Jerusalem from the rest of the (in part still occupied) Palestinian areas.

The secret meeting follows weeks of tug-of-war, with Van Mierlo seeking to find a solution which would offend neither the Palestinians nor the Israelis. In addition it was important that the conversations not cause a domestic disturbance in Israel in connection with the royal visit.

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One of the five members of the Palestinian delegation, journalist and lawyer Ziad Abu Zayad [name as published], declared yesterday evening that the subjects discussed during the meeting included the Israeli occupation, the Jerusalem issue, and the consequences of the unilateral Israeli blocking off of the Palestinian areas.

This morning Van Mierlo first meets PLO Chairman 'Arafat in Gaza. The minister wants to test out 'Arafat's reaction to the Israeli proposal for European supervision of the Palestinian general elections to be held on the West Bank and in the Gaza strip. Based on talks with his Israeli counterpart Peres, Van Mierlo declared that "the elections could possibly be held before the end of this year."

Sha'th Says World Bank Ready To Pay Remaining Loans

JN3003093595 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0800 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The World Bank has said it is ready to disburse the remaining loans, set at $600 million, that the European group had pledged to the National Authority. This was stated by Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation in the Palestinian National Authority.

At a news conference he has held in Gaza, Dr. Sha'th said that the National Authority asked British Prime Minister John Major during his visit to the region to use his good offices to expedite the disbursement of the loans.

Spokesman Comments on 'Traffic Accident' in Gaza

JN2903210195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on today's incident in the Gaza Strip, Marwan Kanafani, spokesman for President Yasir 'Arafat, has stated the following: A traffic accident occurred between a Palestinian truck and an Israeli vehicle beside the Abu-Jubbah gas station near the settlement of Netzarim. As a result of the accident, two Israeli passengers were killed. Israelis then shot and killed the Palestinian truck driver, placed a pistol next to his body, and prevented Palestinian and liaison forces from investigating the accident.

The Israeli Army also intends to blow up a truck that was present at the scene of the accident.

The Palestinian National Authority has strongly protested these Israeli actions, which will increase tension and open the door for uncertainties on both sides. The Authority appeals to the Israeli Government to immediately allow Palestinians to participate in the investigations.

Authorities To Begin Issuing New Passports

JN3003085895 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 30-31 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo (Petra)—Arab League Secretary General 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid Wednesday [29 March] received the fist copy of the Palestinian passport from Muhammad al-Subayh, executive secretary of the Palestinian National Council. Mr. al-Subayh, permanent delegate of the Palestine Liberation Organisation to the Arab League, said the passport was valid for all Arab countries and is written in Arabic and in French. In Amman, Minister of Interior Salamah Hammad said Jordan considers the Palestinian passports as legal and will allow Palestinians to use these passports when crossing the Jordanian territories in their way to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage. Around 5,300 Palestinians will be leaving for Hajj this year, according to sources at the Ministry of Interior. The sources said these pilgrims will be the first to benefit from these passports. Ahmad al-Tamimi, director of the Palestinian Ministry of Interior, said the authority would begin issuing passports on Friday to Palestinian residents of the two self-rule areas, Gaza and Jericho.

People's Party Urges Recourse to Talks Suspension

MM3003095195 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 29 Mar 95 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Palestinian People's Party Urges Use of Weapon of Suspension of Negotiations With Israel"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The Palestinian People's Party has declared that Israel sees the Cairo agreement as nothing but a renewed certificate of ownership enabling it to step up its usurpation of Palestinian territory and then its confiscation of the Palestinian people's right to their homeland and identity and to liberation from occupation.

It urged the Palestinian Authority [PA] to use suspension of the negotiations as a weapon of retaliation.

A statement issued by the party on the occasion of Land Day said that the Israelis thought they could fool the world by repeating their claims about halting the confiscations and settlement through a commitment to halt the building of new settlements, but the confiscations continue with the aim of beefing up existing settlements and building new ones on the pretext that they are just new quarters.

The statement called on the PA to stand firm in the face of the occupation offensive because that was the only way to deal with Israel's violation of its promises and commitments under the signed agreements and with the continuation of its settlements expansion.

It said that the PA should brandish the weapon of suspending the negotiations as a way out of the vicious

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circle and in order to demonstrate its seriousness about resisting the occupation ambitions.

World Bodies Urged To Halt 'Encroachment' on Jerusalem

JN2903180995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Information Ministry in the Palestinian Authority has called on the international community and its cultural institutions to halt the flagrant encroachment on the city of Jerusalem and its ancient heritage—an encroachment that hurts the feelings of Muslims and Christians and heeds no political or moral considerations.

A statement issued by the Information Ministry condemned a decision made by the Israeli Government and the Ehud Olmert [Jerusalem] municipality to hold celebrations in September to mark the so-called third millennium of King David's proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of the Kingdom of Israel.

Hamas Denounces 'Arafat Threat To 'Smash' 'Mujahidin'

JN2903211195 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, has strongly denounced the ready-made statements constantly voiced by 'Arafat and the members of his limited authority to condemn our people's mujahidin's heroic operations, which enjoy broad popular support. In a statement today, the movement denounced 'Arafat's statements to yesterday's issue of the Zionist paper YEDI'OT AHARONOT in which he threatened to unleash his men against our people's mujahidin in order to smash them.

Hamas stressed that those statements are a flagrant attempt to support Rabin's terrorism and demonstrate blind compliance with the enemy schemes aimed to destroy the blessed resistance to the occupation. Hamas warned the 'Arafat authority against participation in a joint authority-Zionist scheme to repress the mujadhidin.

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Algeria

FIS' Anas on Relations With Armed Groups

MM2903134395 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 28 Mar 95 p 4

[Interview with Abdallah Anas, member of FIS Executive Committee abroad, by Jamal Khashuqji in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Khashuqji] Why has the Islamic Salvation Army [AIS] announced the unification of its command and why was Madani Mezraq appointed as its commander in chief?

[Anas] We must go back to the beginning, when the people reacted to the coup (1992) and many decided that jihad would be the best way to confront the coupists, who sent their tanks into the streets and annulled the people's right to choose their government. This reaction was public and spontaneous and was not instigated by the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS], which is a political party.

Groups which believed in the method of jihad and abide by the Islamic Front's policy were formed within the framework of the Islamic Salvation Army, which did not declare itself as an organization. Other groups chose to operate under the name of the Armed Islamic Group [GIA]. But when the GIA announced the unification of military and political action under its own command, its action constituted an act of injustice toward and a negation of the FIS, particularly as the GIA alleged that the FIS had attached itself to it, which was like the big joining the small and the genuine joining the impostor. So the AIS had no alternative but to declare itself publicly directly, particularly as the unification process which took place within the framework of the GIA was ambiguous. The fact is that the FIS was neither a subsidiary nor an enemy of the GIA. But the GIA went as far as declaring that all have joined the framework of the GIA as an organization, as a line of behavior, and as a course of action.

The AIS had two main organizations: one in the East, commanded by brother Madani Merzaq, and the other in the West, led by brother Ahmed Ben Aishah [name as transliterated]. When the initiative for the unification of all forces was proposed, the idea was put to all groups throughout the country including the central and southern regions. This process took some time. Finally it was announced that agreement has been reached on choosing brother Madani Merzaq, who comes from Jijel, as sole commander. Though he was little known at countrywide level, he was renowned for being the first to raise the call [for jihad] in his part of the country. But with the start and expansion of the jihad, he became better known and so did his leadership capabilities, and thus the majority of people rallied around him.

[Khashuqji] Was he one of the FIS leaders?

[Anas] Yes. He had been a member of the FIS provisional bureau in the Eastern region since the days when the FIS was practicing political struggle and he has many years' standing in the field of the Islamic Call.

[Khashuqji] What is the true relationship between the Group [GIA] and the FIS? What would you say about the statement issued in the name of the Group which indirectly criticized the "Salvation Army"?

[Anas] I have read the GIA's statement and found in it certain matters which require verification either through the Shari'a or through resort to the Men of Knowledge and Fatwas to discuss them from the point of view of Islamic religious laws. I refer specifically to the question of "God's hand is with the Group." This is because the fact of the matter is that the Algerian Armed Group was not the group that the P[illegible] may God bless his soul and grant him grace, [illegible] us to uphold in his well-known utterances a [illegible]e Group of Muslims. For the GIA is just one of [illegible]ny groups which are fighting this apostate regime, and consequently it has no right to call itself the Group of Muslims.

Another matter that disturbed us was the threats they directed against the AIS when they said "this is a warning before the final settlement." What settlement are they talking about when the nation has not awoken yet from the shock of the crisis it has been suffering as a result of the disputes and division that erupted within the ranks of the Afghan jihad? The use of such expressions will serve no one. Furthermore, the Algerian people could do without internal conflicts and they have enough suffering meted out to them by the regime, which has been massacring them, violating their honor, and spreading corruption throughout the land.

In fact, we hope the aforementioned statement is a fabrication and falsely attributed to the GIA and does not reflect its true opinion. But anyway, we are following the matter internally and warn them against sparking off sedition.

[Khashuqji] What about the armed clashes between the two sides that have been reported?

[Anas] According to my information, there have been no clashes. Occasionally, there has been some friction, but generally the relationship internally is good. The problem lies with those who claim to represent the GIA abroad. All such talk about clashes is nothing but reports disseminated by the regime.

[Khashuqji] There is some ambiguity concerning the statements attributed to the GIA. It is being said that some of its statements were either fabricated or falsified. How do you in the FIS deal with this state of affairs?

[Anas] We deal with the GIA as consisting of two detachments: The first is the detachment waging the struggle internally. The members of this detachment

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hold all respect and admiration for the two shaykhs (Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj) as well as for the Front's line.

The second detachment is the one abroad, which is under the influence of some quarters there which are neither Algerian nor have an Algerian background, particularly in the light of what we hear of attacks and animosity they have been pursuing against some Ulema and religious preachers.

Some of them have used the GIA abroad as a springboard for attacking many of the Ulemas and preachers in the Islamic world to serve their own ends. Indeed, the brother members of the GIA in the internal arena have condemned these actions in their recent statement and described those committing them as opportunists who try to brand others as infidels.

We are in constant touch with the brothers internally. Furthermore, our brothers in the Islamic Army always tell us that they too are in constant touch with them and they have close relations of cooperation with them. Thus our problem is with those who repudiate the Ulema and all Muslims and shed their blood.

[Khashuqji] You have spoken of the infiltration of foreign quarters into the ranks of the Armed Group abroad. Can you specify these quarters? What do you know about the Palestinian Abu Qitadah, who regularly publishes articles in the AL-ANSAR pamphlet and quite often attacks the Ulema?

[Anas] We have been following with concern the activities of those people and know where they are. Our concern is not for Algeria alone but also for Islam. For the Islamic movement itself will be harmed internationally as a result of the activities of these deviationist leaderships. Indeed, it has already suffered in more than one place. A strong stand must be taken against these leaderships by the true Islamic action leaderships.

We would not be far from the truth if we were to cast doubt on the true intentions of these people and to ask who stands behind them. The question is not one of extremist opinions but perhaps also of suspect relations. Suffice it to ask: Why cannot the Western capitals tolerate the representatives of a legitimate party that has won in free elections [i.e. the FIS], and so they deport them and accuse them of advocating violence, when at the same time they tolerate those who openly call for violence and repudiation.

Why do they harass brother Mousa Karouash [name as transliterated] [one of the FIS' leaders] in Paris and place him under house arrest, despite the fact he is moderate in his thinking, and at the same time tolerate an extremist who repudiates Muslims and issues Fatwas permitting the slaughtering of women?

As regards the Palestinian Abu Qitadah, I shall confine myself to saying that I had once met a man with that name in Peshawar and found him to hold extremist ideas, to repudiate people and despise the Ulema. I disagreed with him. But sadly, he managed to influence a small group of people who happened to be in Peshawar. So I call upon my brothers in the GIA to remove such people from their ranks. May I add that he was not one of the Mujahidin and has never been a member of any front but worked as a teacher in one of the institutes in the latter years of the jihad.

[Khashuqji] Why have you not adopted a clear stand toward the extremist fronts?

[Anas] Because we can do without these subsidiary fronts. There is a genuine front, which is the front of the coupists group led by General (Mohammed) Lamari and his companions, who seized power and overturned the choice of the people. We believe that this Front is an apostate one which is hostile to God's Book and the Islamic plan. It is our basic concern. We are not branching out into new strife.

[Khashuqji] A few days ago, you in the [FIS] Executive Committee denounced the GIA's assassination of innocent people and the killing of women. Anouar Haddam of the FIS Parliamentary mission has done the same. But the GIA inside of Algeria has not denied its connection with such actions and it is the one principally accused of committing such actions. But it is the same group you praised a short while ago in your interview, when you said that it was close to you in the FIS. How do you explain these two conflicting stands?

[Anas] Everyone is responsible for his actions before God and history. We in the FIS, in its Islamic army, do not take any step before reviewing it according to religious laws and making sure that it is permissible under these laws. So we do not approve of threatening students nor threatening women working in the police or the army or their families. We would never target a woman just because she is the wife of a policeman or the wife of one of the special forces which have committed the most abominable acts. We refer to God Almighty who said: "Nobody shall be held responsible for the actions of another."

We pray for guidance even for those who are against us and we always give them advice. But if anyone goes to extremes in his hostility, he will render himself liable to punishment just as happened to that woman who is called (Laila) Aslaoui and the other women who joined her in passing the death sentence in a kangaroo court on some old men who had all the legitimacy and who had won the acceptance of the majority of the people more than any others of the men currently in office. Aslaoui has dared to pass the death sentence against them. Thus she joined the ranks of fighters and became liable to the religious laws which will punish her in the same way. Yet, we still pray to God Almighty to grant her guidance. We in the FIS have rallied together to reform people and not to punish them.

As to the GIA, we will cooperate with anyone who agrees with us and does not go in his actions beyond what the

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religious laws, which we want everyone to be guided by in all their affairs, decree. But we will not cooperate with those who go to extremes in this regard and deviate from the rest under whatever name they assume. We pray that they will find guidance and will return to the right path.

[Khashuqji] Can you influence the GIA's internal members?

[Anas] There is a development taking place in the position of the GIA and there are some who work with it. But I do not like to elaborate in this regard. In both groups [the FIS and the GIA] there are rational people who can resolve the differences of opinion between them.

[Khashuqji] How do you explain these acts of excessive animosity and killing being committed by both sides in Algeria: the regime and the Islamic opposition?

[Anas] The excesses were started by the coupists and the warring political parties such as the party of Elhashmi Elchareef [name as transliterated] (the Communist Challenge Party) and the party of Saeed Saadi [name as transliterated]. These were the people who, together with Lamari and his clique, led the country into the situation it finds itself in now. Their actions led to the intensification of the reaction by the Mujahidin. We hope, however, that this intensification will be in the right.

[Khashuqji] Some of the journalists who have visited the areas of the armed groups have found that there was cooperation between the AIS and the Armed Groups. Has the situation changed now following the recent GIA statements?

[Anas] As I have already said, we hope the recent GIA statement is a fabricated one and was not issued by it. But, anyway, relations [between the FIS and the GIA] are good depending on the areas they are in. If officials on both sides in an area are rational and their only concern is to fight the regime, relations become good between them. But there are some areas where friction exists between the AIS and the GIA.

[Khashuqji] You lived in Afghanistan for most of the years of your struggle and you were close to Ahmad Shah Mas'ud (former Afghan defense minister), and you saw how their triumph ended in sharp conflicts and civil war. Do you not fear the same thing might happen in Algeria?

[Anas] No. I hope not and I do not expect it to happen, God willing. This is because the things that bind the Algerian people together are much more than the things that divide them. They are bound together by race, religion, and creed. But in Afghanistan, there were numerous races and creeds.

We expected conflicts in Afghanistan. The conflict between the Society and the Party (the two most important Afghan parties) is very old. We had hoped only that both sides would refer to God's Book and the Teachings of His Prophet, may God bless his soul and grant him grace. But unfortunately they resorted to arms, and I blame one specific side for that. However, this is not what we are discussing in this interview.

In Algeria, there is a political system and a Constitution. Even the Islamic Front was prepared to accept the rule of the Constitution when it entered the elections. Furthermore, in Algeria no triumphant side will exclude the other side. Undoubtedly things were proceeding well but the problem arose only because the eradicationist group refused to accept the choice of the people and was not prepared to coexist in peace under the aegis of an Islamic government.

After this great crime of theirs, I cannot envisage a place for them in Algeria in the future. I am not passing sentence on them but I do not think they will stay in Algeria once defeated. They will be the ones that will refuse to live alongside the Islamists and not vice versa.

As to the other national parties, they are with us despite the differences in our perceptions. This was demonstrated in Rome and against the background of the national covenant around which the overwhelming majority of the Algerian people have rallied.

EL WATAN Reports Death of GIA Leader

LD3003105395 Paris LCI Television in French 0800 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The head of the GIA [Armed Islamic Group] is reported to have been killed in Algeria. The most wanted leader of the Algerian underground groups most probably died in a recent offensive by the security forces. The daily EL WATAN reported this news this morning.

Family Denies Report

LD3003103295 Paris Radio France International in French 0630 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Algeria—There is controversy and uncertainty over the fate of Djamel Zitouni, the alleged leader of the Armed Islamic Group—while the daily EL WATAN reported in yesterday's edition that he had been killed, the family of the Islamist leader says that Djamel Zitouni is definitely alive.

War Veterans Group Deplores Murder of Ben Boulaid

LD2503211495 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 25 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The National Organization of War Veterans in a statement has deplored the crime of assassinating Abdelouahab Ben Boulaid, the eldest son of the martyred hero Mostafa Ben Boulaid.

The statement said that in the midst of the preparation for marking the anniversary of martyrdom of the hero, the revolutionary circles and the whole of Algeria are

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shocked by the assassination of Abdelouahab Ben Boulaid while he was on his way to the capital of the Aures to mark the anniversary of the martyrdom of his father, an occasion in which the National Organization of War Veterans had regularly noted his martyrdom and showed admiration for his heroism and sacrifices.

This criminal act, the National Organization of War Veterans adds, carries more than one indication. It is not a mere assassination, but it also aims at killing every good seed that symbolizes the revolution and the revolutionaries because Abdelouahab can not be but another Mostafa, as the saying goes: this cub is from that lion. [passage omitted]

The National Organization of War Veterans stresses that such savage acts will not affect its endeavor to restore the smiles, hope, and tranquillity to the people and the homeland. [passage omitted]

Zeroual Meets With Veterans Leader

LD2903213695 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At the presidential headquarters, within the bilateral consultations that the head of state began with the political parties, organizations, and leading figures, President Liamine Zeroual received Ali Kafi, secretary general of the war veterans organization. [passage omitted]

Following the meeting, the secretary general of the national war veterans organization gave the following statement:

[Begin Kafi recording] We discussed the presidential elections. In particular, political and security-technical issues. We viewed all these aspects and made and earnest contribution to these issues. We let our opinion on these issues be known, especially with regard to the broad participation of all the political sides in the coming presidential elections. We believe that this will not happen unless we all work for the return of security and stability to the citizen. [end recording]

13 'Terrorists' Killed; 2 Arrested

LD2903175995 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1700 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement by the security services announced this afternoon the killing of 13 terrorists and the arrest of two others during various operations carried out by the security forces. The two terrorists were arrested following a complaint lodged by a trader whom they had tried to swindle.

'Authoritative Source' Responds to False Foreign Reports

LD2903222695 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the persistence of some foreign media organs for some days in spreading a collection of rumors and false information about Algeria and the continuation of this campaign on the airwaves of Medi 1, and quoting the well-known London-based newspaper AL-HAYAH, an authoritative source has provided a categorical denial of these rumors and said that they conceal intentions and stands toward Algeria that are well known.

The media organs that are spreading these rumors are upset by the reforms that have been taking place in Algeria. Choosing a time to spread these rumors for quite clear motives is not considered coincidental, especially when Algeria has been witnessing development in preparation for the presidential elections. Algeria is assuming new control of the security situation and is making efforts to develop the national dialogue.

The source added that Algeria had opted for transparency. The bets on the Algerian crisis are well known. The manipulators are also known, whether they are at home or abroad.

Barter Trade Sanctioned in Southern Provinces

LD2603141795 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 26 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Commerce and the ministry delegate to the Finance Ministry in charge of the budget have specified the procedures of conducting barter trade on the borders between Algeria and each of Niger and Mali. This decree has been published in the official gazette.

The aim of this barter is to facilitate the supply of the population of the provinces of Adrar, Illizi, and Tamanrasset only. Therefore, commodities imported through the borders barter trade can not be marketed outside those three provinces.

Amazigh Students Comment on MBC Call for Boycott

LD2803214495 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 28 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the boycott called for by the Movement for the Berber Culture [MBC] since the beginning of the year, the coordination committee of Amazigh pupils and students issued a statement in which it expressed indignation at the turn of events, noting the division inside the MBC that showed a willingness to argue more than to genuinely adopt the Amazigh demand.

The coordination committee of Amazigh pupils and students also noted that after the attempt to overturn the boycott decision of [MBC leader] Ferhat Mehenni and after condemning the decision, there are parties who refuse to go back to school and who keep a suspicious silence.

The statement said: We have realized that everyone is using the Amazigh to achieve ulterior goals. Therefore,

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the establishment of a national council for the Amazigh and a consultative commission is the best way to resolve this issue. The coordination committee of Amazigh pupils and students thinks that it would be best if the debate was transferred to the level of government's institutions.

Drinking Water Supply Suspended in Several Areas

LD2803105095 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 28 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The water provision, distribution, and management authority has announced, in a statement we have just received, that due to the bad quality of water, it has been decided to suspend the provision of drinking water in the following municipalities; Cheraga, Douera, Kherissia, and also the area of Ain Allah, as of 27 March at 1500.

Therefore, all subscribers in the aforementioned municipalities are requested to refrain from using the tap water as well as the stored water.

Ministry Blames Fuel Leak

LD2803184795 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 28 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The situation has been brought under control following the accidental leakage of a quantity of fuel in Kaddareh Dam and in water pumping points in Tipaza, sources at the Ministry of Health and Population said today.

The sources added that monitoring observation units had been set up in the provinces of Algiers, Blida, Tipaza and Boumerdes in addition to a central crisis unit.

Moreover, water valves were closed in Kherissia, Douera, Ain Allah, and Cheraga. Boumerdes province urged citizens not to use water until further notice.

However, nobody has been hospitalized because of the above mentioned accident at Keddara Dam, according to the health ministry. The ministry's statement added that the leakage of fuel in Mazafran area was a result of an old pipe linking Sidi Ghzine and Chiffa.

For further information, the ministry inform the citizens to contact the following number: 115.

Having ascertained that the water distributed to the districts of Cheraga area was not suitable for drinking because of Phosphate and petrol pollution, according to preliminary tests, the local authorities closed the water tank valves to prevent accidents that might harm the population of the area.

In a telephone contact Channel 1 made with the head of the administrative district, he stressed that there were no poisoning cases and the necessary measures had been taken to meet the citizens' needs of water by tanks. The official said that the results of the tests will be ready in 48 hours, therefore, the population of Cheraga should be careful not to use the water which citizens stored at home.

Poisonings From Water Reported

LD2903185295 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The health services have recorded about 300 poisoning cases in a number of quarters in the Ain Mlila administrative district in Oum El Bouaghi Province, which experienced the poisoning nightmare yesterday. In order to know the causes of this poisoning and the measures adopted, our correspondent Mahfoud Guidam contacted the health director in Oum El Bouaghi Province, who said:

[Begin unidentified Oum El Bouaghi health director recording] We hurried to adopt measures by calling doctors and making medicines available. So far, 23 people have entered the hospital, including five people who left and went back to their homes in good condition. The condition of the remaining 18 people is improving day by day. Thus, following initial analyses, we see that this phenomena is not that of typhoid fever. It is the result of poisoning through water. We noticed that those people lived in three different quarters, and the only factor that connected those people together was water. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Egypt

Accord With U.S. Said 'Polite Declaration' Ending Aid

NC3003084295 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 27 Mar p 1

[Report by Mas'ad Nuwwar]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Egyptian-U.S. partnership agreement, which U.S. Vice President Al Gore finalized during his visit to Cairo last week, is considered by economic sources as a polite declaration on halting U.S. aid to Egypt. AL-'ARABI has learned that the articles Washington proposed and Egypt approved stipulate that the agreement will replace the aid in two years.

Dr. Hamdi 'Abd-al-'Azim, dean of the Academy of Administration Sciences, clarified that the agreement allows U.S. officials to interfere in the management of Egypt's economy internally and on a larger scale than the IMF and World Bank.

Foreign Minister Musa Previews U.S. Visit

NC2903171795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1355 GMT 29 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 29 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa will leave Cairo for New York and Washington tomorrow morning for talks with U.S. officials to prepare for President Husni Mubarak's visit to the United States at the beginning of next week. Musa said that President Mubarak's talks with U.S.

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President Bill Clinton and other senior officials in the U.S. Administration and Congress will focus on the peace process in the Middle East and the obstacles facing it on all tracks, particularly the Palestinian one, so that the peace process will continue and will forge ahead.

Musa said that on behalf of President Mubarak he will open a meeting on the Middle East within the framework of the peace process that will be held by the International Affairs Council in New York. He noted that afterwards he will leave for Washington for meetings with senior officials in the U.S. Administration to prepare for President Mubarak's visit.

Responding to a question on Israel's readiness to withdraw its forces from a number of West Bank cities, Musa said that Egypt hopes that the redeployment of the Israeli forces was agreed on within the framework of the Declaration of Principles. He said that this is an important matter which we support, adding that if there is progress in this regard I hope it will be tangible and in line with the Declaration of Principles.

Answering a question on the Turkish invasion of north Iraq, Musa said that Egypt hopes this issue will end as quickly as possible.

Makes Statement, Leaves for New York

NC3003105895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0950 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa left Cairo this morning for the United States to prepare for President Husni Mubarak's visit scheduled for Saturday [1 April]. Musa is scheduled to go first to New York, where he will deputize for President Mubarak in opening a meeting on the Middle East within the framework of the peace process. The meeting will be held under the auspices of the International Affairs Council in New York.

In a predeparture statement, and in reply to a question on whether there are differences between Egypt and the United States, Musa said: I do not believe there are differences over the peace process. He said: Regarding the current difficulties, we are working to overcome them, especially as the United States and Russia are the cosponsors of the peace process.

Discussing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Musa said there are points of agreement and points of disagreement. Among the points of agreement is the global nature of the Treaty, he said, noting that there are no differences between us and the United States on this issue. He stressed the importance of the Treaty. He said we also have an important point relating to the Israeli nuclear program and arrangements to improve some of the Treaty's clauses and shortcomings, and, therefore, we do not agree with the view favoring the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

Discussing the Lockerbie issue, which President Mubarak will discuss with President Bill Clinton, Musa said that every aspect of this issue will be discussed. He noted that every aspect of the U.S. efforts to impose an oil embargo on Libya will also be discussed, adding that we have our views on Libya and there will be room for an in-depth discussion.

Regarding the economic side of the talks, Musa said the Egyptian-U.S. summit will deal with the means of supporting the Egyptian economic reform program within the framework of the partnership agreement signed between the two countries during U.S. Vice President Al Gore's recent visit to Egypt and enhancing efforts to encourage investment and trade relations, particularly since the agreement provides for the transfer of U.S. technology to Egypt.

Commentary on Importance of Mubarak's Washington Visit

NC2903173395 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 29 Mar 95

[Commentary by Zayn al-Ja'fari: "The Decisive Timing of Mubarak's Washington Visit"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the context of preparing for President Husni Mubarak's U.S. visit on Sunday [2 April], Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, will make intensive contacts today and tomorrow with U.S. officials and Congressional leaders. Musa's and al-Baz's talks with the U.S. officials come four days before the president's visit to Washington and his meeting with President Clinton.

This meeting is considered the most important one ever held between the two leaders. The Egyptian-U.S. summit talks will deal with issues of great importance to the Middle East peace process, notably Egypt's stance on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]. President Mubarak will reiterate his position that the Israeli nuclear program threatens Egyptian and pan-Arab security. He will explain that Israel's continued exclusion from the treaty poses a great threat to the region.

The president's talks in Washington will seek agreement of Egyptian-U.S. views on two major issues. The first, as we noted above, is the Egyptian stance on the NPT. The second pertains to the Egyptian views on the real reasons that threaten to derail the Middle East peace operation.

Although Egypt acknowledges the NPT's importance, it cannot accept its indefinite extension because Israel, who has a peace treaty with Egypt and is looking forward to normalizing its relations with the Arab countries and playing a role in a new Middle East on the basis of regional cooperation, possesses a nuclear capability not subject to international inspection.

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Although the United States acknowledges Egypt's right to demand a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction, it believes that the Egyptian stance must not hinge on Israel's position. This U.S. position was made clear by U.S. Vice President Al Gore during his joint news conference with President Mubarak in Cairo last week. However, Israel's nuclear reactor is not far from Sinai, indeed nearer to it than Jordan or the northern Arabian Peninsula.

It is noteworthy that Egypt and Israel have conducted intensive talks about this problem. Egypt proposed a compromise: It would accept the NPT's extension on condition that Israel commit itself to joining the treaty according to a specific timetable. Israel still refuses this offer and clings to its position.

The timing of Mubarak's Washington visit is crucial, coming only two weeks before the New York vote on extending the NPT on 17 April. What is really worrying is that Israel's monopoly of nuclear weapons will certainly continue even after the vote. Egypt therefore realizes that this issue cannot be faced by legal means but must be handled by political and security methods. It realizes that Israel's espousal of a strategy of nuclear deterrence complicates the issue still more. Israel does this by propagating reports about its possession of a nuclear arsenal.

We do not need here to detail Israel's reasons for this strategy because they are well-known.

We state that President Mubarak's visit to Washington is one of the most important he has ever made. Its results will have very important consequences for the Middle East process.

Envoy to Israel Notes 'Calm Diplomacy' Over Treaty

NC3003081195 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 30 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni, in Tel Aviv, by Fawzi al-Jundi, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [al-Jundi] Ambassador, President Muhammad Husni Mubarak will visit the United States on Saturday [1 April] to discuss many issues, such as the peace process, bilateral ties, and the renewal of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and the need for Israel to sign the Treaty. There were reports of Egyptian-Israeli contacts to resolve the crisis.

[Basyuni] The president's visit to the United States is very important. It comes at an extremely delicate stage as far as the peace process, the renewal of the Treaty, and relations between Egypt and the United States are concerned. We know the central role President Husni Mubarak is playing to advance the peace process. All the sides acknowledge this role and demand its continuation. Concerning the Israeli side, the president of the state, the prime minister, and the foreign minister are undoubtedly calling on President Mubarak to play a central role to push the peace process forward. Without Egypt, there will be no progress on the various negotiating tracks.

As for the Treaty, calm diplomacy is now at work. There are Egyptian-Israeli contacts in an attempt to reach an understanding on this issue. Let us continue these efforts until we, God willing, reach an agreement that satisfies everyone.

[Al-Jundi] Thank you Ambassador Muhammad Basyuni.

[Basyuni] You are welcome.

Protests Over Israel's Participation in Fair Reported

NC2703144695 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 21 Mar 95 pp 1,6

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israel's participation in Cairo International Fair has triggered intense fury among ordinary Egyptians and various political quarters. The Zionist participation, for the first time in many years, has been met with protests, denunciations, and condemnation. The nationalist forces are expected to stage a huge demonstration in front of the Israeli pavilion.

Cairo and 'Ayn Shamas universities have witnessed protest activities. The security forces have taken stringent security measures around Egyptian universities, especially Cairo and 'Ayn Shams universities, to prevent noisy demonstrations against Israel's participation.

Political quarters say the government has backed down on its previous stance of many years of rejecting Israel's participation. They describe the government's new stance as a tendency toward normalizing relations with the Zionist enemy. This has prompted the various national and political forces to express immense anger at this new stance. Some nationalist elements have threatened to stage peaceful marches to protest this step.

David Sultan, the Zionist entity's ambassador in Cairo, attended the opening of the fair on Saturday [18 March] amid unprecedented security measures and in an atmosphere of popular resentment and rejection of this participation.

Reports indicate that over 30 Zionist industrial and commercial companies are participating in this year's Cairo International Fair. [passage omitted]

Wafd Party Urges Firm Stance on NPT Issue

NC3003100795 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 27 Mar 95 p 1

[Statement issued by Wafd Party on 26 March]

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[FBIS Translated Text] The Wafd Party believes that bringing the issue of Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] before the public is a new development, contrary to the policy followed when Egypt signed the NPT in 1968 and ratified it in 1981, because the success of any foreign policy depends on the public's support and a popular determination and solidarity.

The shock in which the Egyptian and Arab public now find itself in with regard to the NPT issue is being caused by the policy of obfuscation that was pursued in the past.

However, from the premise of its historic national responsibility and its pan-Arab feelings, the party believes that the Arab Egyptian Government's revelation of the dangers posed by Israel's refusal to join this treaty is some sort of correction. Hence, it calls on the government to oppose strongly and firmly anything that harms Egypt's national security and peace in the Middle East. Israel's refusal to comply with the NPT clauses and to subject its nuclear program to guarantees represent a direct threat to Egyptian national security and pan-Arab security and hampers the success of the process of the comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East.

Therefore, the Wafd Party warns of the consequences of the arbitrary policy followed by Israel, which will not be in the interest of any of the parties to the conflict in the region, including Israel itself.

The party calls on the international community to issue a new Security Council resolution more general and comprehensive than its Resolution 255 of 1968 to include clear and strong guarantees by the five nuclear states and the United Nations that ensure the safety and security of the non-nuclear countries that have signed the treaty against any country that might be tempted to use these terrible weapons or threaten to use them against non-nuclear countries that have signed the NPT.

The Wafd Party also calls on the five nuclear states to implement their commitments as stipulated in the NPT, namely to stop completely all nuclear tests and draw up a timetable for removing nuclear weapons and their means of delivery from their arsenals.

The party calls on the Arab Egyptian Government to coordinate with the Arab and nonaligned countries to attain international status for the treaty and to make the nuclear states implement their commitments. The Wafd Party also urges the Egyptian Government to benefit as much as it can from the treaty clauses that give the signatory countries the right to benefit from the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The Wafd Party believes that this crisis is bound to remind the government that popular support is its only refuge when foreign and internal countries threaten our dear homeland. Consequently, it has to respect Egyptian public opinion in the future and under all circumstances and to implement its will and decision on fateful issues within the framework of the Constitution and under the aegis of freedom and democracy.

PA's 'Urayqat Meets With Musa on Negotiations

NC3003063295 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa last night met a Palestinian delegation headed by Sa'ib 'Urayqat, minister of local government in the Palestinian Authority [PA] and head of the Palestinian delegation to the negotiations with Israel. Afterward 'Urayqat said he informed the foreign minister of the latest developments in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, the achievements to date, and the obstacles that remain. He said the issue of Jerusalem, the most important subject in the peace process, remains unresolved, as does the size of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

'Urayqat said 95 percent of Palestinian preparations for the elections have been made in cooperation with the European Union. He said he explained to 'Amr Musa the Palestinian viewpoint regarding the obstacles to the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles so that they can be raised before the Americans.

AL-AHRAM Says No Real Problems in Ties With Sudan

NC3003064095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0605 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—AL-AHRAM stresses that there are no genuine dilemmas hindering a settlement of Egyptian-Sudanese differences. The only thing needed is for the new chapter in bilateral relations to remain open, it says.

In its editorial today, the paper states that an important meeting between Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and Sudanese Foreign Minister 'Ali 'Uthman in Cairo was positive, according to the Sudanese minister's own statement.

AL-AHRAM points out that Musa's expected visit to Sudan to continue a discussion of pending issues shows that the two countries have true intentions and are preparing to overcome many of the problems of the past.

Libyan External Liaison Secretary Arrives in Cairo

NC2603184795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1757 GMT 26 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Mar (MENA)—'Umar Mustafa al-Muntasir, secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for the People's Bureau for External Liaison and International Cooperation, arrived in Cairo this evening on a visit of several days to Egypt.

The Libyan secretary will attend the African foreign ministers' extraordinary session, slated to begin its work in Cairo tomorrow, Monday.

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Discusses Lockerbie With Arab League Chief

NC2803200195 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1915 GMT 28 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 28 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid today received 'Umar al- Muntasir, secretary of the People's Committee for External Liaison and Cooperation in the Libyan Jamahiriyah.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid stated that he had handed the Libyan official a copy of the letter he had sent to UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus- Ghali on the Lockerbie crisis, in implementation of the recent Arab League Council's resolution. He added that he had discussed with al-Muntasir the Lockerbie crisis and briefed him on his talks with Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev.

Appeals Court Lifts Ban on Film Denounced by al-Azhar

NC2903124095 Paris AFP in English 1044 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 29 (AFP)—An Egyptian appeal court Wednesday [29 March] lifted a ban on a hit film which the country's leading Sunni Moslem authority had judged to be blasphemous.

The Emigrant by Egyptian director Yusuf Shahin was banned by a Cairo court on December 29 after the Al-Azhar institution denounced the film for personifying Joseph, who is a prophet in Islam.

Two Executed for Attempt To Kill Author Mahfuz

NC2903123095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1207 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—Two of those convicted of the attempt to assassinate world famous author Najib Mahfuz were executed this morning.

Security sources said that convicts Naji Mustafa and Muhammad al-Mahallawi were executed this morning at the Appeals Court Prison in Cairo.

The court convicted 11 others in the attempt and sentenced them in January to jail sentences ranging from three years to life.

Paper Claims Secret Detention Camp in al-Minya

NC2703145895 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 21 Mar 95 pp 1,6

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a serious development in the security confrontation of the acts of violence in al-Minya, the security authorities have prepared a secret hideout in the Western Desert, 40 km west of Samalut. Over 700 persons rounded up during the recent wave of indiscriminate arrests are being kept at this hideout.

Informed sources have told AL-SHA'B that the secret hideout consists of houses in Village Number 4 at the end of Shushah Road in Samalut. It is a deserted ghost town which was populated for many years by a large number of immigrants from the Suez Canal towns following the 1967 war. The immigrants completely evacuated the village in the middle of the 1970s after the reconstruction of the Canal towns.

This detention of suspects in locations other than those specified by law has aroused great fear that these persons, whose numbers are increasing daily, will be liquidated since there is no control over their place of detention. [passage omitted]

People's Assembly Economic Committee Approves GATT

NC2803164095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1350 GMT 28 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 28 Mar (MENA)—The People's Assembly Economic Committee, meeting today under the chairmanship of Dr Mustafa al-Sa'id, approved the GATT in principle.

The committee members urged the government to adopt serious measures to confront the effects of this agreement on the Egyptian economy.

They affirmed the need to encourage domestic products against the policy of flooding the market with foreign goods. They pointed out the urgency of passing a law banning monopoly and the flooding of the markets with goods.

Commenting on the deputies' deliberations and questions, Economy and Foreign Trade Minister Mahmud Muhammad Mahmud remarked that the Egyptian economy faces foreign challenges. He noted that Egypt has no option but to join the GATT. [passage omitted]

The economy minister explained the agreement's potential benefits for Egypt including giving it the right to amend customs duty and receiving compensation in case of damage to its agricultural products. [passage omitted]

Security Chief on 'Terrorism,' Muslim Brotherhood

NC2803103795 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 22 Mar 95 p 6

[Interview with Major General Muhammad 'Abd-al-Fattah 'Umar, director of security in al-Minya Governorate, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [AL-AHALI] How do you assess the security situation and can you explain the relative respite in terrorist acts?

['Umar] I was appointed two months ago and given wide powers to confront the terrorist elements. For me, there

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is no difference between those who call themselves the Islamic Group and those who call themselves the Muslim Brotherhood. Based on this, I worked out my plan for confrontation, which, of course, I cannot make public. But achieving a maximum state of alert, applying instructions with extreme precision, and trying to obtain the greatest amount of cooperation at a minimal cost—especially regarding getting information from citizens—are the plan's main features.

I believe the current calm is due to the success of our security plan. We dealt blows to every terrorist hideout, and this threw them off balance. We also ensured citizens' safety when they provided information, which helped us gather a decent amount of information. Our superiority has been evident recently. The terrorist groups carried out no major operations, only operations that showed their tension and despair, like attacks on second-class policemen and sentries en route to their homes. These attacks indicate that the structure of the terrorist organization has collapsed, and that some individuals are acting randomly; their fall is now imminent. [passage omitted]

[AL-AHALI] Why, then, did you decide that the 'Id prayers be held only in mosques [they are usually held in large public squares]? Does this not hurt the feelings of ordinary people?

['Umar] The decision was made for two main reasons: First, security in the governorate and the presence of extremist trends there. Second, the decision was a test balloon for the position of those who call themselves "Muslim Brothers." They daily announce that they are against terrorism and support any measures that minimize losses. Regrettably, they failed the test. They tried to violate the decision, but the security forces were alert to them. It became clear that they are not much different from those terrorists. As for people's feelings, citizens understood the decision. The mosques were full, and after prayers, citizens took to the streets to express their joy. The 'Id passed without any terrorist incident.

[AL-AHALI] Where are the remaining resistance pockets?

['Umar] The terrorists are in their home villages or in villages where they have relatives. They spend the day in sugarcane plantations and then go to houses to hide. We are watching them, but some families are helping them. The villagers [al-sha'biyun] are not giving us any information about the movements of these terrorists or the houses in which they hide. The terrorists sometimes enter houses by force, using their terrorism against poor families; people do not report this to us.

[AL-AHALI] Some people cooperated and gave information, but they were killed.

['Umar] Those people were publicly boasting of their relationship with the security forces. But since I started work I have adopted the method of secret reporting through my private telephone. We scored many successes, and none of our informants has been killed. This has alarmed the terrorists. [passage omitted]

[AL-AHALI] What about popular resentment over the expansion of the circle of suspects?

['Umar] I met with villagers, who explained their fears. They said the security forces knew those young men, and they wondered why they had not been arrested. I told them I was concerned with the present, and they promised to cooperate, but they did not. Although we have a large information base about the terrorists, we still need to know their movements and hiding places. I could not have stood with my hands tied. I applied the decision to expand the circle of suspicion and placed the decision to release suspects after questioning in my hand, not with subordinates. The villagers came to me after they were besieged by questions from the people, and they began to supply information about suspects. This helped me a great deal, and I used the information to score many successes. [passage omitted]

[AL-AHALI] When will these strict security measures end? Some people fear they will continue until the elections.

['Umar] We still have three months from today; I think terrorism will recede completely. Terrorists must change their plans or leave; we are giving them no chance to think. The elections will be held in a very clam atmosphere, without extraordinary security measures.

Interior Minister Discusses Security

95LD0034A Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 24 Jan 95 p 3

[Interview with Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi, by Ni'mat 'Aysawy, in Cairo; date not given: "The Interior Minister in a Frank Interview: Terrorism is Retreating!"—first six paragraphs are AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Weighed down by the heavy burden...he feels the weight of responsibility, he and the rest of his men, the nation's sentries. They are beaten down by the work that they—he first among them—perform for more than 20 hours a day. They spend this time alert, zealous, missing out on all the pleasures of daily life enjoyed by the ordinary citizen, who works and plays and spends time with his family and friends. Even more than this, they sense—earlier and stronger than anyone else—the danger of the lawbreaker, whether he carries tweezers for pickpocketing, a knife for murder, or a bomb for spreading terror and devastation.

He and his men are unjustly treated. The reckless campaigns against them strike home. Even though they realize the objective is to strike at the nation's security and stability, still they are left facing the muzzle, exposed to shrapnel from all sides.

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He is unjustly treated. For this reason, he knows the meaning of unjust treatment and feels the depth of its pain. For this reason, he does not feel that this justifies oppressing others! He believes that their duty is to be an ever vigilant eye in the service of God, one of the two eyes that will not be touched by fire!

He is the Minister of Interior, Major General Muhammad Hasan al-Alfi, leader of the National Guards, who are celebrating their anniversary these days...the anniversary of a day 44 years ago when the Isma'iliya police force refused the orders of the British commander, who was backed by weapons and thousands of armed forces. They joined the people in the battle against the colonialist...out of love of country.

Now, despite the difference in the time and circumstance, the same cohesion is required...to protect the nation in the battle for stability, development, and progress!

Set in the Major General's office, the interview lasted two hours, at the end of which he said, "I am willing to answer any question, but there are national security secrets that I cannot reveal now. I say to you frankly, 'Even though you treat us unjustly, if only you knew what we are hiding and were aware of what we are doing!'"

['Aysawy] Police Day is the commemoration of the stand the police took alongside the people against the occupation forces and their collaborators. What has happened to make some among the people confront the police with bullets? What is your concept of the relationship between the police and the police over the last more than 40 years?

[Al-Alfi] Police Day is in fact the anniversary of the day when it joined with the people to confront the occupation. On this day the cohesion between the two visibly and splendidly began. As for what that terrorist clique is doing today, its target is not the police alone; it is wider and higher than that. The target is security and stability in Egypt, as in other Arab countries, not just in Egypt and Algeria. To achieve their goals, they deceive the youth, taking advantage of the intellectual vacuum and economic conditions to fill their minds with erroneous ideas in an attempt to brainwash them in order to control them and incite them to attack stability and progress to profit those who are behind these groups abroad.

They are a tiny, deviant group and, especially recently, the people are standing with the police against terrorism, just as they stood together against the occupation.

['Aysawy] Security is Egypt's pivotal problem right now. What do the police need in order to quickly stabilize security?

[Al-Alfi] The terrorist operations are carried out by enlisting some of the people and influencing them both intellectually and materially. Thus the climate that creates the opportunity for these enlistments must be exposed and confronted. For example, intellectuals, clergymen, and cultural figures should be motivated to expose these sabotage activities, teach the people to think correctly, and give them something to protect them against deviancy.

To summarize, what is needed is to harness the political, popular, intellectual, religious, cultural, youth, and media institutions, alongside the economic and production institutions, to change this climate that permits enlistment of our young people. There has indeed been coordination among these institutions, which has had an effect in assisting the police by providing it with information and resisting the terrorists. The more cooperation, the better the result. I don't have the slightest doubt that the problem will be resolved!

['Aysawy] The phenomenon of terrorism is not local to Egypt, but is also an Arab, Islamic phenomenon...even an international one. Do you agree with this view?

[Al-Alfi] Yes, it can be said that terrorism in general is a worldwide phenomenon. Violence is found in many countries, as is organized crime. However, there are characteristics particular to each type or region. With regard to our Arab and Islamic region, there is terrorism masked by religion. There is no doubt that behind it are international organizations who plan it, finance it, and provide training for it in order to strike at the Arab and Islamic nation. This has been revealed by investigations that point to organizations, societies, and individuals abroad.

['Aysawy] What are the features of the terrorism phenomenon, both internationally and in the Arab world?!

[Al-Alfi] Terrorism is terrorism. There are Mafia gangs, narcotics, murders, and kidnapping. Here, as I mentioned, it is masked by religion. The goal is the same: to attack stability and progress and spread chaos. If there was stability, progress, and development, then the Arab nation would move forward, raising the banner of Islam. This would not please some others, so they form organizations for terrorism, violence, cruelty, and destruction without mercy or humanity while cloaking themselves in religion. Religion has nothing to do with this.

['Aysawy] Is there a link between what has happened here and what has happened abroad?

[Al-Alfi] If by "abroad" you mean the Arab nations, what is happening here is just like what is happening in them. The concept and the goal are the same; even the initiator is the same, as is the financing and the training.

['Aysawy] We hear about worldwide centers for the movement of groups in European capitals. Why are their details and locations not exposed?

[Al-Alfi] There are indeed international centers and meetings being held in the capitals of Europe, the United States, and others. We know this and are watching it. There are contacts going on regarding this between us and some of the nations involved, but we cannot reveal our cards.

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['Aysawy] Moving from talking about terrorism to the reality: How long will the state of emergency and the curfew last in Mallawi in upper Egypt?

[Al-Alfi] For a short time. I would like to clarify that when a curfew is imposed in an area, it is for the people's sake, so that some cannot use them as a cover for launching an attack from inside a crowded market or street, etc. It is also to protect them and to eliminate that which impedes the activities of daily life. This is necessary for a very limited period of time in order to rip out the roots of the terrorists who commit repugnant and cowardly acts, such as assassinating a passerby and then escaping into a crowd or fields.

We have directed crushing blows at them, and 97 percent of those accused of committing recent incidents have been arrested.

Internal Calm

['Aysawy] Some months ago we thought that terrorism was on a steep decline, and then some incidents occurred in Upper Egypt. Is it possible to say when domestic tranquillity will return for good?

[Al-Alfi] The occurrence of isolated incidents in separate areas from time to time is not worrisome. There is internal calm; the proof of this is that 120 international conferences have been held in Egypt recently, and not a single incident occurred. Tens of thousands of people from around the world attended these conferences and performances, among them the opera, "Aida." Thus our society is living in peace, unaffected by such aimless acts as attacking a train in passage or firing on a car. Terrorism has been exposed and everyone knows this.

['Aysawy] What are the objectives and dimensions of counterterrorism cooperation between Egypt and Arab countries such as Tunisia and Algeria and non-Arab countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, and how effective is this cooperation? What were the results of the Arab interior ministers' conference?

[Al-Alfi] There are bilateral contacts between us and other nations in this regard. With regard to Arab nations, we used Egypt's delegation to the Arab interior ministers' conference to propose inscribing the issue of terrorism in all countries, and we presented a working paper in which we explained the need to take joint action to monitor terrorism's leaders, due to their single, shared goal, and also to track financing sources. It also emphasized the need for a joint Arab media plan to combat deviant, extremist thought. We spoke of the need not to consider terrorist organizations as organizations with an idea or view, or else their leaders will be considered political refugees if they go to some countries. This is ridiculous, because the leaders of these organizations are criminal terrorists, not politicians. They are proponents of violence, not religion. They practice destructive terrorism, not politics. They have nothing to do with religion. The Almighty said, "Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way." [Translation from Pickthall, Surah 16, verse 125.] The Almighty said, "Whosoever killeth a human being wrongfully, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoso saveth the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind." [Translation from Pickthall, Surah 5, v. 32, except for the word "wrongfully," as the Minister slightly altered the verse. It should say "Whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth..." instead of "Whosoever killeth a human being wrongfully."]

So spoke the Lord in the Koran...and so says the Prophet...but these terrorists and their leaders consider it lawful to murder, plunder, steal, and lie, and they justify it however they please. Meanwhile, we have the Prophet as a good example, for when he emigrated from Mecca to Medinah, he counseled 'Ali ibn Abi Taleb to give immunity to his comrades, and among them were some who were not Muslims. So what do you think of those who justify to themselves stealing from or shedding the blood of Muslims who disagree with them, and who even justify spilling the blood of their own comrades who have left them and repented!

As for cooperation with non-Arab countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan, bilateral agreements are being concluded for increased exchange of information and cooperation in apprehending these individuals, particularly those who have already been convicted.

Police Deputies

['Aysawy] People were pleased by the presence of new policemen—the police deputies—in the streets, but there are still many areas complaining of lack of police. When will these men be located in every neighborhood and street...making the people feel safe and secure?

[Al-Alfi] The police deputies are a new organization that we are currently putting into practice and expanding to all of the Republic's governorates until they are located everywhere. We are currently looking for places in every governorate to establish institutes for police deputies in order to graduate educated policemen like the class that graduated last year. One class will follow another until the police reach a very advanced level of training, proficiency, and modernization.

['Aysawy] Is there a plan to improve the work and proficiency of the police stations so that the citizen will meet with decent treatment in dealing with them? Their obstructiveness and other types of behavior alienate the people, so they don't go to submit complaints or give witness.

[Al-Alfi] Graduation of the police deputies alongside the municipal policemen with the education and training that they both have, as well as the skill, training and experience they will gain, will raise the proficiency level and improve treatment in the police stations and in every interaction with policemen.

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In the past, because people did not want to work as policemen, we had to rely on uneducated enlistees and work on educating and training them. When they reached a degree of proficiency, their enlistment was over!

I would like to say that, concerning the treatment at police stations, there has been an historical complex between the people and the police since the time of the occupation because the police were used in spite of themselves against the masses for the benefit of the colonialist; especially since their leaders and higher-ranking officers were British, of course. Conditions have changed and the police's slogan is now "in the people's service." I always repeat this and I work hard for this slogan to be the truth and to be put into practice.

It is true that there are some excesses on the part of officers and other police personnel, but this is not the rule, and it violates the Interior Ministry's general code. There are many good examples of sacrifice and integrity among the police; their work is a mission, not just a job.

We have the General Administration for Inspection, whose officers monitor and evaluate performance in the various police stations and centers. They punish those are negligent in their treatment of the public. We also do the same thing in the departments that deal with the public, such as the traffic, licenses, work permits, and civil status departments.

Just as the police department has improved its performance and achieved the impressive results praised by the world, it must earn respect and love through its work and interaction with the people. I'll tell a secret: I commission some of my friends and acquaintances to go to various police offices to tell me what happens and how they were treated. We must be extremely strict and punish the negligent and remove them from contact with the public. The important thing is for us to work with competence, respect, and love.

Female Police Officers

['Aysawy] Your Excellency, why did the system of having female police officers fail? Are women not suited to this work?

[Al-Alfi] The policeman's work is exhausting and difficult; it requires long stretches of duty, even night and day, and patrols in any location. The female officer is different in her circumstances. She gets married, has children, and cares for her infant; her leave time can consist of years, according to the law. This gets in the way of work.

However, without a doubt having a female police officer working in some areas presents a more civilized appearance. For instance, work in the women's prisons, the vice squad, juvenile wardship, licenses, and tourism. In general, this matter needs more study.

['Aysawy] Let's move on to the elections. We'll ask first about the new system of opening up the process of registration in the election rolls. Can you give us some information on this?

[Al-Alfi] Extending the period for registering in the election rolls to three months, instead of one month, had good results. The rolls were purged of the deceased, the convicted, and those stripped of their political rights, and those whose names were not found were registered. We started this period on the first of last December; at the end of this coming February, the registration lists will be announced, and any citizen will have the right to challenge them if he finds a name that should be deleted or does not find a name that should be there. All of this is preparation for the next elections for the People's Assembly, the Advisory Council, and the local councils this year, God willing.

['Aysawy] What do you think of the talk about having a judicial body supervise the election process without the police having any role, unless the judicial body calls on it for certain specific purposes?

[Al-Alfi] This is happening now. The judicial body is the one that supervises the election process and judges are both the chairmen and the members of the committees and subcommittees. The police's role is merely to protect the system. In addition, the judges are the ones who sort the votes.

['Aysawy] In the same vein, what are the safeguards for the next elections, about which there has begun to be talk?

[Al-Alfi] The election safeguards are proper registration in the election rolls, the judges' holding up their responsibility, and the police protecting the system. I emphasize—to go back to my answer to the previous question—that our role is only to protect the system. We have no role in what goes on in the voting halls or in sorting the votes.

['Aysawy] Your Excellency, what is the nature of the cooperation between you and the other security and monitoring agencies?

[Al-Alfi] There is constant cooperation between the Interior Ministry and the other agencies (General Intelligence, Government Security, Military Intelligence, and Administrative Oversight); we cooperate in exchanging and supplementing information. Each agency has its specialty and its own role. However, our objective is the same: to protect Egypt from any foolishness and any violation of the constitution or the law.

These agencies carry out important missions, even when their work is not public.

['Aysawy] Are there political prisoners in Egypt?

[Al-Alfi] Absolutely not...No...No one has been or will be arrested for an opinion or idea or tendency or politics. This has not happened at all and will not happen.

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As for those who have been arrested under the Emergency Law, they constitute a danger to state security and to the public safety. There must be evidence against them because we do not arrest the innocent. God Almighty will judge us.

Periodic Inspections

['Aysawy] Do Egyptian prisons treat the convicted and prisoners badly? Are they regularly inspected?

[Al-Alfi] The prisons are subjected to periodic inspections. We investigate any complaint immediately, even if I have to go to the prison myself to find out the truth. So why are we attacked from time to time?

People must understand the truth: the police have sacrificed, are sacrificing, and will sacrifice, and the role we have played recently is extremely important. God only knows what terrorism would have done to us and to what end it would have pushed us. Almighty God enabled us to abort and expose important operations hours before they were carried out!

People must know that there is a premeditated attempt to distort the image of the police in Egypt. There are those who invent provocative stories just to defame security. This is a trick that is not hidden to us.

However, despite administrative and judicial oversight of the prisons, we must acknowledge that there are older, unsuitable prisons that are more than 80 years old. Therefore, we built three new, more modern and advanced prisons in record time and have moved those prisoners who were in the deteriorating prisons to them. We are continuing to build other, modern prisons to replace the old ones.

['Aysawy] On Police Day what do you say to the people?!

[Al-Alfi] I would like the people to cooperate with the police and to know that the police are their sons and daughters.

['Aysawy] And to the police?

[Al-Alfi] Work in silence and calm...Know that the greatest reward comes from God Almighty. You are men with a mission. Recall the saying of the Prophet, peace be upon him: "Two eyes not touched by fire...one eye cried from fear of God..and one eye remained watchful in God's service."

['Aysawy] And to the terrorists?

[Al-Alfi] Show mercy to your country and your religion for the sake of God.

['Aysawy] And to lawbreakers in general?

[Al-Alfi] Return to your senses. Crime does not and will never pay.

[Box, p 3]

Torture is Forbidden

The Interior Minister said, "Torture is forbidden, and it is not practiced when anyone is arrested. The talk about it is a campaign against us. Torture is prohibited by the constitution and the law. There is no statute of limitations on it, so it is difficult for any policeman to commit the crime of torture, knowing that he is subject to criminal penalty even after he leaves the service."

The Minister said, "They castigate us for photographing the suspect in prison. This is ridiculous. Any workplace, even a supermarket, has video cameras to monitor the premises. Are we not permitted in monitoring the prisons and properly controlling them to protect the system by recording what happens in them as documentary evidence?"

Minister Interviewed on Oil Policy

95LD0032A Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 3 Feb 95 pp 24-27, 74

[Interview with Dr. Hamdi al-Banbi by AL-MUSAWWAR panel including Ghali Muhammad, Izzat Badawi, and Ashraf Al-Gadawi; in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Hamdi Al-Banbi, the Minister of Petroleum and one of the world's leading oil experts, combines scientific and practical experience. This was reflected in an interview with AL-MUSAWWAR in which the minister emphasized his desire to diversify the schools of thought with respect to oil drilling because a decision has been made to dig in a location that requires some imagination and daring. He said that drilling has taken place in only 32 percent of the land area of Egypt. Exploration will take place in the Delta and the Mediterranean region because the possibilities of finding oil there are high. The minister announced that the explosion of the storage tank in Durunkah during the floods was, by any measure, an absolutely exceptional incident.

He said that no exception has been made for Israel and that there is no special commitment to her concerning oil exports, because we are exporting at world prices and under world conditions. He said that Egyptian gas does not compete with any other and that there is no truth to the oft-repeated assertion that Qatari gas threatens Egyptian gas, especially when it comes to Israel.

The minister was accompanied by a number of experts and officials from the Ministry of Petroleum: Dr. Rafiq Mushrif, the deputy director of the Petroleum Authority; Engineer Ahmad Khalaf, head of the Oil and Gas Company; Dr. Muhammad Shawkat, an adviser; Engineer Sanad Al-Bana, the deputy minister for technical affairs; and Fikri Mustafa, the minister's executive officer.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is the extent of Egypt's capability for attracting international oil drilling firms?

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[Al-Bandi] Oil investments are characterized by great risks and extend over many years. Despite this, there is a strong demand for drilling in Egypt, especially among Western companies.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How has this demand shown itself? What have you done to attract these companies?

[Al-Bandi] We are well aware of the changes that have taken place throughout the world in the oil investment market and what is required particularly with regard to environmental regulations. We have started amending the texts of some of our agreements in order to bring them into line with these regulations. We are making amendments that will prove attractive to the investor and assure him that by working with us he will not be in conflict with international environmental regulations. We have also started applying a flexible policy that aims to help companies increase their profits, to reassure investors about our development program, and to reduce losses, especially in comparison with foreign companies, etc. We are allowing foreign firms to cede a portion of their concessions to other firms in cases where they obtain additional concessions in other areas. This simple measure will not harm us. However, it will reduce the risk that investors face and will lead to several approaches instead of just one in each region.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What we are hearing is that flexibility means being particularly generous to foreign companies.

[Al-Bandi] Flexibility will never mean that we are giving up any of Egypt's material rights. This has not happened and will not happen. If we compare the agreements that were concluded using the policy of flexibility, we shall find that this policy conforms almost exactly to previous agreements.

Besides, other states give many concessions to investors, even if they do not publicize that.

Ten Agreements on the Way

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How many agreements has the Ministry of Petroleum concluded?

[Al-Bandi] In 1994 we signed about eight agreements. During the present year we are preparing to sign 10 agreements, six with European companies, three with American companies, and one with a Russian company. We are trying for a degree of regional balance in these agreements.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Have drilling companies covered all of Egypt or at least the areas where there might possibly be oil?

[Al-Bandi] Our agreements with 23 international companies cover 32 percent of the land area of Egypt. There are new agreements that will cover 6.5 percent of the land area of Egypt. We are now negotiating agreements that, if concluded, will cover another 7 percent. We have areas totalling 17.5 percent of the land area of Egypt that are open to bids from firms.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is our rank among producers?

[Al-Bandi] We are considered one of the medium-sized producers. We produce 900 thousand barrels of oil and 1.2 million barrels of gas a day. The production of some of the large producing states is equal to ours. However, our consumption is huge in view of our growing population, in addition to Egypt's ambitious development program.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] For years the prevailing view has been that our reserves are sufficient to last us for 10 to 12 years. What is the situation today?

[Al-Bandi] Our reserves, which still stand at 2.4 billion barrels of crude oil, are sufficient to last 10 years. We are striving for new discoveries that will compensate for what we have drawn from our oil reserves.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is our largest producing oil field?

[Al-Bandi] After it was discovered, the October field in the Gulf of Suez produced 60,000 barrels a day. After it was developed, it produced 160,000 barrels a day.

There are oil rich areas in the Gulf of Suez such as "Al-Gharadaqah," that we have abandoned so that they could be exploited by other activities such as tourism. We are trying to compensate for that by concentrating only on areas in the Delta, the Mediterranean Sea, the Western Desert, and the Nile Valley—areas with greater possibilities for gas than oil.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] In what area have you started drilling most recently?

[Al-Bandi] Next week we shall start drilling the first well in Upper Egypt, in Suhag to be exact.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How is a drilling site chosen? And why Suhag of all places?

[Al-Bandi] After an international firm has explored a certain region, the results are assessed so that specialists can be sure that there are strata of earth that probably contain oil. Digging then begins at a deeper level.

The well that we shall start digging next week in the "Al-Balina" area in Suhag will be 10,000 feet deep and will cost millions of dollars. This cost will be borne entirely by the foreign partner. If a discovery is made, the Petroleum Authority will get involved with the foreign partner.

We will announce a new discovery in the Western Desert near al-Fayum that will be based on a new scientific theory.

No Exceptions in the Sale of Oil

[AL-MUSAWWAR] To whom and how do we sell Egyptian oil?

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[Al-Bandi] We sell oil to every country in the world. Egyptian oil is tied to price rates that go up and down according to world prices. This connection pleases us. This connection pleases us. The majority of our customers are governments, next are companies that own refineries, and then a small percentage of companies that supply refineries.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What quantities are we selling to Israel?

[Al-Bandi] We sell to Israel 2 million tons of oil out of our total exports of 11 million tons annually.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] It is said that an exception is made for Israel in terms of setting prices and quantities?

[Al-Bandi] No exception is made for Israel or anyone other than Israel.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Is there an Egyptian-Israeli contract in the field of oil sales?

[Al-Bandi] They benefit, and so do we. We benefit because of the short distance between us and them. The carrier ships go back and forth quickly. Hence, we do not accumulate storage supplies. In that way we sell at world prices, and as quickly as possible. And we do not have to stop production while waiting for the return of the ships.

Israel also benefits from the short distance between us, which means that they pay lower transport costs.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] But in reality, does the sale take place with the required transparency?

[Al-Bandi] The transparency of the sale exceeds the requirement.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Are there no payoffs for individuals, officials or the sons of officials?

[Al-Bandi] Absolutely. No payoffs are being made to anyone.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Are you sure that any company you deal with is not paying people off?

[Al-Bandi] We deal with governments, companies, and international businessmen. Before we deal with any entity it must pass through three stages:

First, the Egyptian security authorities must be sure of its standing.

Second, the Egyptian banking authorities must verify its financial situation and the level of its transactions in the world market.

Third, we must have sufficient oil. Sometimes the entity in question will pass the first two stages, and then we will not have excess quantities for export. Consequently, we will not accept it.

We Are Not Thinking About Privatization

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Has the Egyptian private sector entered the field of oil drilling?

[Al-Bandi] All drilling companies are foreign. There is a private sector company known as "The Public Oil Company." There is an Egyptian company from the private sector that has recently entered this field with the agreement of the People's Assembly. Several foreign companies have had as partners individuals from the Egyptian private sector.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Who owns the private sector company?

[Al-Bandi] In reality there are two companies. A contract has been signed with the first. The People's Assembly has agreed to the second, even though an agreement has not yet been signed with it.

The company with which a contract has been signed approached us through one of a group of Egyptian scientists living abroad. They obtained an area in the Gulf of Suez.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] With whom exactly did you sign the contract?

[Al-Bandi] With Dr. Rafiq al-Jundi, the former director of Aramco In London.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Have you also opened the door to the Egyptian private sector in the field of refining?

[Al-Bandi] Wide open.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Is thought being given to privatizing the oil sector?

[Al-Bandi] There are two ways to privatization. The first is that we would sell some of the entities that now exist. The second is that we would leave the existing entities at their present size and entrust any new expansions to the private sector.

At the present time we find that it would be difficult to sell the eight existing refineries.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Why?

[Al-Bandi] Because they represent the safe limit of a strategy to provide petroleum products without causing price speculation or disruptions in the market. This is an old practice. Even if we thought about selling them, we would not find a buyer who would pay the real price. In any case, we want them operating in good running order.

At the same time we are opening the door to the Egyptian and foreign private sector to build new refineries for export only.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Why for export and not for local production?

[Al-Bandi] So that there will be no disruptions in the local market, and because these refineries will be built in

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free trade zones. If their products enter the local market, they will pay customs and fall under the supervision of the Ministry of Supply.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Has the private sector proposed building refineries?

[Al-Bandi] Several individuals who are not serious have made proposals to us. However, an agreement has now been reached to establish the "Midor" refinery in Alexandria, which is a regional investment program, and another refinery in Suez known as the "Egyptian-Kuwaiti Investment [Company]."

Israel and the Alexandria Refinery

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is Israel's role in the Alexandria refinery?

[Al-Bandi] The foreign partner in the Alexandria refinery is the Irish Company for Oil Refining. Different nationalities take part in this company, among them an Israeli establishment.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Is there a stipulation that it will sell its production directly to Israel?

[Al-Bandi] It will sell its production to anyone who wants to buy it. There is no stipulation that its production be sold to Israel in particular.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Will this refinery buy a portion of the crude oil that will be exported to Israel?

[Al-Bandi] It will indeed buy the same crude oil that we export to Israel from the Ra's Gharib field, but it will buy part only, and not the entire quantity that will go to Israel. They are asking us for 1.5 million tons of crude oil at world market prices. I believe that they have also signed contracts with Penzoil and [Mexique] for approximately 3.5 million tons.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is the size of investments in this refinery?

[Al-Bandi] It exceeds $1 billion.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is its productive capacity in comparison to our eight refineries?

[Al-Bandi] The public sector refineries have an annual capacity of 30 million tons. The capability of this refinery is 5 million tons. The Egyptian-Kuwaiti refinery in Suez also has a capability of 5 million tons.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is it that made us line up with Israel to establish this refinery?

[Al-Bandi] The refinery is not Israeli. We reached an agreement with an Irish company in which the Israelis own a 50-percent share. The Egyptian Petroleum Authority has a 30 percent share in the capital invested in this refinery, in addition to Egyptian businessmen who also own shares in it.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Therefore the Alexandria refinery is not Egyptian?

[Al-Bandi] The "Midor" Company has become an Egyptian company. As long as it operates on Egyptian soil, is subject to Egyptian law and complies with investment law 330, it is 100 percent an Egyptian company.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How much does the petroleum sector contribute to the revenues of the public treasury?

[Al-Bandi] The net is about 10.4 billion Egyptian pounds.

Storage Tanks and the Durunkah Fire

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What are the safeguards that the Ministry of Petroleum is putting in place for the fuel storage tanks scattered throughout Egypt so that what happened in the village of Durunkah will not happen again?

[Al-Bandi] All of the pipelines and storage tanks have protective and security devices that conform to the highest international standards. When it comes to putting out fires, we may find that the English code is more effective than the American code that we follow. We are adopting the English code. Each storage tank is surrounded by walls that will suffice to prevent the escape of any gas or liquids from the tank. Enclosures are in place, and the building code is being followed. Fire extinguishers are found in all of them. Lightning rods are found above all oil installations.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Why then was there a fire in Durunkah?

[Al-Bandi] Historically, the Asyut governorate has been known as a dry region where there is little rain. On the one hand, 1914 was the last time the region had abundant rain worthy of the name. On the other, a reading of history also indicates that all of the floods come from the eastern mountains and flow into the Nile, whereas the Durunkah region is located in the west. Therefore, there was no problem in selecting a location.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Will the storage tanks that are located near housing blocs be moved?

[Al-Bandi] Absolutely, because the purpose of these storage tanks is to make petroleum products easily available to our citizens everywhere. The storage tanks are safe, and the Durunkah incident was the only one of its kind. We are seeing to it that buildings are designed to withstand an earthquake registering seven on the Richter scale, while storage tanks are designed to withstand an earthquake registering eight on the Richter scale. The Durunkah incident was as exceptional as the rising of the sun in the west and could not happen again.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How will natural gas be installed in homes that were ruined and dilapidated?

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[Al-Bandi] Natural gas will not be installed in homes that are dilapidated. Be that as it may, natural gas is safer than butagas.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What number of incidents have taken place since natural gas was installed in homes?

[Al-Bandi] Until now, only one incident among the 618,000 homes where natural gas as installed.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What caused it?

[Al-Bandi] Natural gas is very safe as long as citizens themselves do not make mistakes. Proof of this comes from the building in Misr al-Gadida that collapsed during the earthquake. There were no fires or leaking gas lines inside it. The only incident took place in one of the buildings in Nasr City. This happened because one of the inhabitants of the building tried to tinker with the gas meter in his apartment, which led to a gas leak. He then locked the apartment and left it until the smell of gas started to spread from inside apartment. This caused the inhabitants of the building to call the security authorities. In this situation the windows and doors of the apartment should have been opened until it was aired out from the gas, because it is very light. What happened, however, was that an electric lamp was turned on when the apartment was opened. This led to electric sparks flying, which caused the whole apartment to go up in flames. This happened even though a card was attached to the meter with instructions about what to do in case of emergency.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Is it not true that all subscribers have this card?

[Al-Bandi] One is found in every home. I am one of the consumers.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] There are great hopes for the use of natural gas in Egypt, either for domestic consumption or for export. To what extent are these hopes based in fact?

[Al-Bandi] The facts underlying these hopes are based on a group of important indications: first, during the 1993/94 fiscal year gas accounted for 35 percent of total fuel usage. This is one of the highest percentages in the world.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is the nature of these uses?

[Al-Bandi] In all activities, whether in home use—10 percent—with the rest being used to produce electric power, or for industry.

Cheaper Auto Fuel

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What are the other indications upon which hopes are based for the use of gas?

[Al-Bandi] The second indication is that 80 percent of electric power is produced by natural gas-powered thermal power stations. We have actually started an experiment using gas as auto fuel, just as we have started using it instead of electricity in an experiment concerning central air conditioning.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How much natural gas is being used as auto fuel?

[Al-Bandi] We now have 30 buses belonging to the petroleum sector that are traveling the streets of Cairo running on natural gas. We also have 130 average Golf-brand compact cars that use natural gas and gasoline at the same time.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Is it possible to fix an average car so that it can run on natural gas?

[Al-Bandi] Of course, it is very possible at a cost of 1,000 Egyptian pounds only. We have three stations where cars can fill up on natural gas. The first is in 'Abbasiya Square, which can fill 50 buses every eight hours using one facility. The second is al-Ma'adi al-Gadida. The third is in Dahshur.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Why concentrate on natural gas for cars?

[Al-Bandi] The reason for concentrating on this is that by the year 2000 there will be stringent measures to protect the environment throughout the world. Regular gasoline has oil in it. What is really the cleanest thing for the environment is the very lightest part of natural gas, which is considered the cleanest form of natural gas in the world. This is what we have discovered in Egypt, and what we are trying to compress and use in cars. The experiment succeeded after two years of trying. This year we received a grant from one of the Italian companies to produce seven buses that run on natural gas in partnership with the Nasr Company for Automobiles. We shall give these cars to the General Transport Authority in Cairo and the Greater Cairo Bus Company to conduct experiments with them on the lines that both companies use in Cairo. We have received an assurance from the American ambassador in Cairo and USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development] that USAID will convert 200 buses belonging to the petroleum sector to natural gas.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Are there other countries throughout the world that have started using means of transportation that run on natural gas?

[Al-Bandi] Yes. Italy, Japan and many others.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Why don't we just buy buses and new cars that run on gas?

[Al-Bandi] Because their cost is very high in comparison to cars that now run on gasoline. The development will not cost much. It is possible to convert a bus that runs on solar power [as published] to natural gas at a cost of 25,000 to 30,000 Egyptian pounds.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] According to the experiment that you conducted in the Ministry of Petroleum, which is cheaper as auto fuel, natural gas or gasoline?

[Al-Bandi] Natural gas is 60 percent cheaper than gasoline as auto fuel.

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[AL-MUSAWWAR] Will the change in fuel from gasoline to natural gas affect the speed of the car?

[Al-Bandi] Absolutely. There are many advantages to the use of natural gas as auto fuel. First, the "octane" level of natural gas is 120, while the best forms of gasoline do not exceed 98. Natural gas also promotes the proper functioning of the internal car parts. Therefore, during the same period, they need less maintenance than cars that run on gasoline. Also, natural gas does not cause corrosion to car parts. On the other hand, the use of natural gas in cars will make it possible to export that portion of gasoline that would be used as auto fuel.

Growing Reserves

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Until now what has been the anticipated volume of natural gas production?

[Al-Bandi] For about two years the confirmed reserves have been estimated at about 12.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, of which 8.6 trillion feet comes from productive fields whose daily production of 1.5 billion feet is equivalent to 300,000 barrels of a oil a day. This equals almost one-third of daily oil production.

The discoveries that were made from mid-1993 until now have led to a rise in the size of the natural gas reserves to a low estimate of 21 trillion cubic feet. It is possible that it will reach 26 or 27 trillion cubic feet.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What are your expectations now for natural gas? When will you start exporting it?

[Al-Bandi] We expect to achieve self-sufficiency. After that we shall export the excess. We expect to start exporting in 1998. We are not obligated—beyond economic considerations that will benefit Egypt—to export in any particular direction. We have various alternatives for exporting. We could turn west using the existing pipelines in Libya and Algeria and export to Europe. Or, we could turn north by way of the Mediterranean Sea either through liquification or pipelines, depending on costs. Or we could turn east toward the Palestinian autonomous areas, Jordan, Israel and then Turkey, and from there to Europe.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What choice has there been until now?

[Al-Bandi] We now have received official requests from Dr. Nabil Sheath, Israel, and Jordan. Therefore, turning east is the best and cheapest of the three alternatives, because there is only one pipeline, which is 250 kgs long, that begins at Port Said or the Delta or in Sinai and ends at our eastern borders. It is possible to have two branches at the border: one going to Palestine and the other to Israel. It is possible that we will give the branch to either one of them depending on the circumstances and [word unclear in original] at the time.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How many years will our stock of gas reserves last?

[Al-Bandi] There are several indications. In the electric sector we have a natural gas reserve that will last about 40 years. This figure necessarily depends on the industries that will be established during that period that we do not know about yet, because it is conceivable that five years from now we will build a new cement or other industry that will consume a higher rate of gas!

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What really is the anticipated volume of natural gas that it will be possible to export from now until the year 2000?

[Al-Bandi] The orders that we now actually have—and about which we have spoken seriously—amount to about 300 million cubic feet of gas, that is 20 percent of our daily consumption.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Has the final price of natural gas been set?

[Al-Bandi] It is still early to decide the price of gas!

We Stay Out of the Competition

[AL-MUSAWWAR] It is frequently said that Israel is playing a comparison game between Egypt and Qatar in order to obtain the lowest prices for natural gas.

[Al-Bandi] We will not compete with anyone. If Israel can obtain Qatari gas in a way that satisfies them or at a lower price, we are not obliged to export gas to Israel. We will export if there are clear economic reasons for doing so.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Is Qatari gas economically competitive with Egyptian gas or not?

[Al-Bandi] No. For that to happen there would have to be investments in Qatar of between $3 and $4 billion. Over $1 billion has been invested in Israel so that they will be able to receive Qatari gas. However, to receive Egyptian gas would not require all these investments in Israel.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Has there been a dialogue between you and the Qataris on this subject?

[Al-Bandi] On this subject the only dialogue has been between the Israelis and me!

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Why has there been no dialogue with the Qataris?

[Al-Bandi] Because the Qataris dismiss the story out of hand and assert that nothing of the kind has happened.

Generally, we try not to compete. We have a fixed strategy of dealing with companies that have drilling interests. Usually these companies repatriate their profits.

The Problem of the Butagas Pipe Has Ended

[AL-MUSAWWAR] The eternal problem is the butagas pipe. Will the introduction of natural gas into 618,000 homes reduce pipe disruptions

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[Al-Bandi] This is correct, taking into consideration a consumption increase of 20 percent and the disruptions that are now taking place in the supply of gas containers because of transport problems.

The surplus resulting from the introduction of natural gas has led to a supply of butagas equal to 8 million tanks. If these tanks are filled 10 times a year, this will provide us with 800,000 tanks a month. We do not have a problem with empty tanks, as proven by the fact that last year we sold 850,000 of them to the citizenry. It is estimated that during the first six months of this year we will sell 600,000 tanks. By the end of the year that number will jump to nearly 1 million empty tanks.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Will disruptions also decrease in the coming years?

[Al-Bandi] Yes, the volume of disruptions will, of course, decrease for the reasons that we have already explained. And, likewise, for two other reasons as well: The first is that we opened 160 new stations last year to distribute tanks throughout the Republic. We opened a new factory that will produce 4,800 tanks an hour. We have doubled the power of the Asyut factory to fill tanks.

We will also open a factory in Quwaysina that will have the power to produce 2,400 tanks, and a regional station to meet the needs of the private sector in Damietta. We have also opened other regional stations to meet the needs of governorates such as al-Minya and al-Sharqiyah.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How much will it cost to install gas in one housing unit?

[Al-Bandi] About 2,400 Egyptian pounds.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How much of that will the consumer pay?

[Al-Bandi] The only thing he'll pay for is the butagas pipe in his apartment.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Will the monthly gas bill be comparable to the consumption price of butagas?

[Al-Bandi] This depends on the consumer. Generally, 80 percent of customers consume about 2 Egyptian pounds of gas a month, in addition to stamps. Twenty percent of customers consume about 16 Egyptian pounds a month or more.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How much do you consume?

[Al-Bandi] Three Egyptian pounds only.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Has an agreement been reached with the International Monetary Fund concerning the prices of Egyptian petroleum products?

[Al-Bandi] We have almost reached the target price. However, it will take us a long time to reach the true target price, because it fluctuates and is tied to international market prices.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Will there be an increase in the price of oil products this year?

[Al-Bandi] There will be no immediate increase until July. I believe that there will be a price increase in 1995.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] We thank the minister for this interview.

Correction to al-Baz Explains Stance on NPT

NC1703193495

The following correction pertains to the item headlined "Al-Baz Explains Stance on NPT Extension," published in the 22 March Near East & South Asia DAILY REPORT, page 20:

Column two, paragraph two, penultimate sentence make read: ...like Israel must not have a monopoly... (adding negative)

Libya

Opposition: al-Qadhdhafi To Restructure Army

MM2903133095 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 29 Mar 95 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Al-Ghadamisi: Libyan Army Expected To Be Disbanded"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Washington, London (AL-HAYAH)—The United States yesterday stepped up its pressure on Libya ahead of a review of the sanctions imposed on it by the Security Council because of its refusal to comply with the request to cooperate in the Lockerbie bombing case and hand over the two Libyan suspects. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, 'Izz-al-Din al-Ghadamisi, official spokesman for the opposition "Coordination Committee of the Libyan National and Democratic Forces," has said that Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi "will take a series of measures to contain the serious effects of a possible oil blockade on his remaining in power, with a view to regulating the explosive domestic situation." He added: "It has been decided to disband the Libyan Army and to replace it with a so-called rotation system [nizam munawabah] consisting of recalling conscripts compulsorily and regularly. The command of the internal security services has been moved to Benghazi, and Col. Sulayman Mahmud has been appointed commander of the military police, whose command too has been moved to Benghazi—which clearly confirms al-Qadhdhafi's increasing suspicions of the people who have been around him for many years."

He went on: "It has also been noted that the regime has been sending its envoys to some opposition leaders abroad, proposing that they leave their residences in the United States and Europe and settle in any Arab country they choose in return for generous financial rewards."

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A Libyan opposition source had told AL-HAYAH that former Libyan Prime Minister Jadallah 'Azzuz al-Talhi, who is currently in charge of the man-made river project, had met with a number of Libyan opposition leaders abroad.

Al-Qadhdhafi Visits Darnah, Comments on Embargo

LD2803153795 Tripoli JANA in English 1448 GMT 28 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al Rabie [March] 28, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—Reaffirming total adherence to the principles and objectives of the great al-Fatih revolution, determined for action to entrench people's power, the power of all people, reiterating allegiance to the leader, declaring defiance to the embargo, embodying the eternal cohesion between the leader and the masses, the leader of the revolution [Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi] met with the popular leaders in Darnah area who met him with chants reaffirming their commitment to carry on building up the exemplary Jamahiriyah, entrenching the people's power and realising progress on the Libyan Arab land.

The popular leaders stressed, thanks to the revolution and the leader, their ability for defiance, continuing the realisation of the achievements being the bridges of transit from backwardness to progress and realisation of freedom for mankind through the third universal theory being a policy for action on the Libyan Arab land.

The leader of the revolution addressed the popular leaders highlighting their tasks and responsibilities for the mobilisation of the masses to confront the enemies if the nation and entrench the people's power. [sentence as received]

The popular leaders in Darnah area made a welcoming speech reiterating their pledge of loyalty to the leader of the revolution declaring that they will remain the loyal soldiers of the great al-Fatih revolution and its leader.

The popular leaders presented locally made tapestry and carpets to the leader as an expression of loyalty and pride in the maker of its victories. And in expression of the resolve and capability of self sufficiency and defiance.

Experts, under the auspicies of the popular leaders, presented their studies and research which they carried out for the realisation of progress in Darnah area and the exploitation of all resources to achieve this sought after goal.

Al-Qadhdhafi Meets With Leaders in al Batnan

LD2903172195 Tripoli JANA in English 1424 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al Rabie [March] 29 JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—Reaffirming total adherence to the principles and objectives of the great al-Fatih revolution, determined for action to entrench people's power, the power of all people, reiterating allegiance to the leader, declaring defiance to the embargo, embodying the eternal cohesion between the leader and the masses, the leader of the revolution [Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi] met with the popular leaders in the al Batnan area who met him with chants reaffirming their commitment to carry on building up the exemplary Jamahiriyah, entrenching the people's power and realising progress on the Libyan Arab land.

The popular leaders stressed, thanks to the revolution and the leader, their ability for defiance, continuing the realisation of the achievements being the bridges of transit from backwardness to progress and realisation of freedom for mankind through the third universal theory being a policy for action on the Libyan Arab land.

The leader of the revolution addressed the popular masses highlighting their tasks and responsibilities for the mobilisation of the masses to confront the enemies of the nation and entrench the people's power.

The popular leaders in al Batnan area made a welcoming speech reiterating their pledge of loyalty to the leader of the revolution declaring that they will remain the loyal soldiers of the great al-Fatih revolution and its leader.

The popular leaders presented a copy of the Holy Koran to the leader as an expression of loyalty and pride in the maker of its victories.

Experts, under the auspicies of the popular leaders, presented their studies and research which they carried out for the realisation of progress in the area of al Batnan area and the exploitation of all resources to achieve this sought after goal.

[Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic at 2000 GMT on 29 March carries a 50-minute recorded speech by Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi to the popular leadership in al-Butnan on 28 March, as noted above. The Libyan leader begins by reiterating his political dogma on the need for the people to govern themselves. He says that the people are the authority. He discusses the establishment and the tasks of the so-called popular leadership in the country to manage local affairs. Al-Qadhdhafi says local people manage their own affairs through a popular leadership whose members are chosen locally. He says that the leadership should seek the help of local experts on how to best manage local resources. He also insists that there should be cooperation among the local population, which should forget ancient tribal conflicts and get on with the job of developing the region. Al-Qadhdhafi refers to economic and social problems facing the United States, in contrast to the superiority of Libya's own political system.]

UN Envoy Restates Stance on Lockerbie Suspects

NC2903203695 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Libya today stressed that the imposition of an oil ban on it will not make it hand over its

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two nationals who are accused of bombing a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie. The Libyan envoy to the United Nations told MBC that his country is ready to survive for hundreds of years without reliance on oil. [passage omitted]

The Libyan envoy to the United Nations put little value on the U.S. attempts and was of the opinion that they were meant for local consumption and for serving domestic U.S. policy.

[Begin recording] [Envoy] After receiving the relatives of these victims, the United States had had to assure them that officially it still demands a solution to this issue and that it will act to bring the two suspects to justice. [passage omitted]

The Americans do not want the suspects to be tried in Libya and are requesting that they be handed over. All the laws of the world ban handing over nationals to a foreign judiciary.

[Correspondent] Why not hand them over and put an end to this problem?

[Envoy] Because if we hand them over it would mean that we have no sovereignty, that we are not a state, and that we are of no value before our people nor are our people of value to us. How can we hand over a national to a foreign court? This would mean that we are not independent. This request is intended to humiliate the Libyan people. The Libyan people are ready to live many years without oil. We lived for thousands of years without oil. What counts to us is our dignity, independence, and our right to differ with others and to solve the dispute through negotiations, and logic, and in accordance with the UN Charter. [end recording]

Mauritania

Prime Minister Criticizes Opposition From Abroad

LD2503234795 Nouakchott ORTM Radio in Arabic 1900 GMT 25 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Work has officially started on the Domdom-Mederdra road after the foundation stone was laid yesterday by Prime Minister Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubaker.

During his visit to the municipality of Tigin, the prime minister held a meeting with the officials of the province of Mederdra. He heard their views about the achievements made in the country, and they conveyed to him the atmosphere of satisfaction at the completion [as heard] of the road, which was overwhelming them. We present this report by Baba Sidi Abdallah on the inauguration ceremony and the citizens' views on the event.

[Abdallah] Prime Minister Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubaker opened his meeting with the officials in Mederdra with a speech at the beginning of which he conveyed to them President Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya's greetings. [passage omitted]

I invite you to listen to the speech with which Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubaker opened his meeting with the Mederdra officials at the municipality of Tigin yesterday evening.

[Begin Boubaker recording] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. God's prayers be upon his honorable messenger. Male and female citizens of Tigin, the province of Mederdra, peace and God's Mercy and Blessings be upon you. [passage omitted]

Undoubtedly, you are following daily the other important gains that the country is enjoying now, namely democracy and freedom; the democracy and freedom which have been consolidated by stability, security, and peace of mind. [passage omitted]

We are not surprised that this democratic atmosphere is giving the opportunity for everyone to express their views; it is providing the opportunity to criticize the government. Undoubtedly, you are following the rallies, newspaper articles, and meetings where the government is criticized freely and which sometimes overstep the boundaries. However, this is one of the gains of the country, which is rare in other countries.

We do not find all that surprising. What we find surprising is that some people, regrettably, attack their country from abroad, and falsify charges to inflict harm on their country at foreign gatherings and foreign meetings. This is what we find surprising. [passage omitted]

Anyone who would blemish the reputation of his country abroad cannot be described as democratic or patriotic. Anyone who makes false charges against his country and people, and anyone who tries to harm his country's relations with brotherly and friendly countries cannot be a patriot, nor can he be a democrat. In civilized societies, this kind of action is called a crime and treason against the homeland.

The Mauritanian people can distinguish between the truth and falsehood, and between the citizens who care about their interests and serve them and others. The Mauritanian people have proved throughout their history and throughout the past periods that before anything else they care about their dignity, sovereignty, independence, and honor. Moreover, they have never given anyone an opportunity to harm these sacred concepts or these orientations. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Morocco

Parliament To Respond to Allegations on Sahara

LD3003124195 Rabat MAP in English 1223 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Mar. 30 (MAP)—The Moroccan parliament will issue an appropriate answer to

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allegations contained in a resolution adopted by the European parliament accusing Morocco of impeding the holding of a referendum in the Sahara.

According to Badreddine Snoussi, head of the parliament's Committee of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, Borders, Occupied Zones and National Defense, the committee held Tuesday a meeting devoted to the European parliament's resolution which invited Morocco to open direct negotiations with the other side and accept observers from the European Union.

Accusations of the European parliament against Morocco are mere allegations that were denied by the Department of Foreign Affairs, he said pointing out that members of the committee agreed to "undertake contacts with members of the European parliament to convince them of the legitimacy of Moroccan claims. [no closing quotation mark as received]

Sudan

Minister Confirms 'Terrorist' Training Camps

MM2903135095 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 28 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by 'Uthman Mirghani: "Confirming Existence of Extremists' Training Camps, Sudanese Regional Minister Attacks Government and Announces His Secession"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—A Sudanese regional minister yesterday announced his secession from the government and fiercely attacked its internal and external policies.

Muhammad Ahmad 'Abd-al-Qadir al-Arbab, minister of health and social affairs in the province of Sannar, in a statement a copy of which was received by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, said that, having lost all hope of reform or rectification by any party within the government and having realized the extent of internal ruin and destruction, he was cutting off his links with the government and joining the opposition.

Al-Arbab said that he had agreed to work with the present government "as someone who wished to serve his country." He added: "But, through my participation, I discovered numerous facts which could not possibly pass without inducing me to break away from them (in the government) and to want to expose them."

He said that on the basis of his work with the government, he is able to confirm that the National Islamic Front [NIF] controls the military and political commands and that "giving some posts to people like us is only meant to mislead."

He also said: The NIF is working for the implementation of a tactical plan to be fulfilled by the end of the year 2002 with the following objectives:

1. Replace the Sudanese Armed Forces with popular defense [forces] by the end of 1997.

2. Replace the regular police force with a popular police force by the end of 1999.

3. Have the civil service entirely in the hands of NIF members by the end of the year 2000.

4. Have all sovereign and constitutional positions entirely in the hands of NIF members by the end of the year 2002.

5. Complete the cultural program, with its secret provisions, under the leadership of the Arab and Islamic People's Congress and its branches in the Arab and Islamic worlds. [passage omitted]

He added: "As an eyewitness and as a minister in the top executive authority, I can emphatically confirm the presence of foreign terrorist groups which come and go and which work at camps for training terrorists in the various Sudanese provinces. There are secret official instructions to facilitate the movement of these groups and enable them to contact NIF members, each other, and the outside world. As I have been working in one of the four provinces adjacent to the eastern borders with Ethiopia and Eritrea, I have observed the movements of terrorist groups working under cover of defending the state and technically linked to the popular defense camps in Kasala, al-Qadarif, and Sannar. The Lakandi forests, Kurdus, al-Mazmum and al-Batanah mountain areas are just some of the numerous camps which also include the eastern mountains south of Kurdufan, the border areas with Egypt, northern Darfur, al-Fash area in the province of Kasala, and Umm Kara' near the Ethiopian borders. All these are temporary mobile camps which shift from time to time in the interests of secrecy. There are locations for the training of terrorist elements in what is called the assassination battalion which has its headquarters in al-Hajj Yusuf near Khartoum. There is also a plan to back NIF supporters in the neighboring countries with the aim of changing the governments there, including opening recruitment camps in border areas and amassing large numbers of popular defense units to reinforce the activities of these groups in their respective countries."

Al-Arbab criticized the government's policy on the war in southern Sudan and said that the government is not serious about finding a peaceful solution. [passage omitted]

Rebel Leader Garang Declares 2-Month Cease-Fire

AB3003103795 Paris AFP in English 1021 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nairobi, March 30 (AFP)—Sudanese rebel leader John Garang announced Thursday [30 March] a two-month ceasefire in the war with the Khartoum government, in response to a call by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

The truce will take effect from noon GMT Thursday, Garang, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPAL), told a news conference here.

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He said the ceasefire is intended to enhance humanitarian efforts and vaccinations programmes in war-torn southern Sudan.

Sudanese president General 'Umar al-Bashir also declared a two-month ceasefire on Monday after meeting Carter who negotiated the truce.

'Armed Group' Attacks Land Registration Office

EA0803193095 Omdurman National Unity Radio in English 1500 GMT 8 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An armed group of citizens had attacked on Tuesday [7 March] the land registration office at Umm Baddah, 14th Quarter, in Omdurman causing heavy damage after burning legal and official documents at the registration office. [Words indistinct] by popular committee members at the site.

Security sources at the area said that security was restored and the culprits have been detained. The source said an investigation has been conducted on the incident and [words indistinct].

[London BBC World Service in English at 1515 GMT on 8 March in the "Focus on Africa" program reports: "Four houses belonging to members of the local authority in the Mbara area were also burned to the ground in an attack which seems to have been triggered by residents' anger that their shanty town has been demolished and may be forced to relocate.

["The demolition was part of the government's drive to get rid of these illegal townships, which they claim are dirty and squalid, and move people to areas where they can have access to running water, schools, and electricity. Many of those who are supposed to benefit from the scheme are deeply unhappy about the plan, however, and have been resisting the action, in this case violently."]

Roundup of Domestic, International Issues

[FBIS MEDIA NOTE]

Sudan Reportedly Makes Overtures Toward Egypt

According to Cairo sources of the Saudi-backed London expatriate daily AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Sudan has "officially assured" Egypt that the latest foreign ministry reshuffle replacing Husayn Abu Salih with 'Uthman Muhammad Taha was "merely a normal change and does not necessarily reflect a hostile or new hardened position toward Egypt or attempts to improve relations with it." The daily also reported that its Sudanese sources are "optimistic" that the recent Khartoum messages carried by Sudanese Ambassador to Cairo Ahmad al-Tayyib al-Kurdufani have satisfied Cairo's demand for clarification of Sudan's current attitude toward bilateral relations. The sources added that this may "begin a new page in normalizing ties." The sources also reportedly said that they expect a Sudanese delegation visit to Cairo to precede that of Foreign Minister Taha to discuss the Hala'ib border issue. They also expect, as a result of a "Sudanese initiative," Khartoum and Cairo to "reopen dialogue over resuming joint activities" in the Nile Valley Authority for River Navigation. (4 March)

Al-Mahdi Says Sudan at Risk

Opposition al-Ummah Party leader Sadiq al-Mahdi said during a 2 March speech at al-Ansar mosque in Omdurman that the situation in his country "has reached a critical stage whereby Sudan's existence is in jeopardy," according to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT on 3 March. The former Sudanese prime minister also has "vowed to continue the opposition, proceed with civil resistance, and launch fierce attacks against the ruling regime," according to the paper. The paper goes on to say that al-Mahdi described deteriorating living standards, the civil war, Sudan's international isolation, and insufficient support of the armed forces as being "many times worse than the ruling regime says it is." Stressing the need for "southern Sudanese to be granted religious, humanitarian, political and civil rights," al-Mahdi reportedly pointed out that "for the first time many southern sectors have found support for their demand for self- determination from neighboring African countries and ranking international agencies."

Sudan Demands Apology From Amnesty International

According to an Agence-France Press report published 8 March in AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, "the Sudanese Government on 7 March demanded an apology from Amnesty International (AI) before it permits the organization's delegation to visit the country." Justice Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz Shiddu reportedly clarified this demand in Sudan's government-owned daily AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH, stipulating that AI's visit to the country is solely contingent upon an apology "for the hostile findings it has released against Sudan."

Amnesty International Rebuts Sudan's Attack

In an interview with the Sudanese Human Rights Organization's London magazine FUWAYS published by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT on 10 March, Amnesty International (AI) General Secretary Pierre Sane rejected Sudan's claim that AI is "anti-Islamic," calling it a "deliberate attempt to divert attention away from the

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human rights violations and deceive public opinion in Sudan and in Islamic and other countries." Sane added that "nothing in Islam justifies torture and execution without trial and that hiding behind religion is a last resort for those who practice repression." He also stressed that "the Sudanese Government is simply trying to avoid taking responsibility for its unfortunate human rights record by claiming that it is being subjected to unjust criticism while conditions in other countries are worse." Sane called on Sudan "to halt the indiscriminate detentions and political killings and bring the human rights violators to justice."

Arrests After Riots in Omdurman

"Over 60 people were announced 9 March to have been arrested in Khartoum for their involvement in riots" two days earlier [See EA0803193095 above headlined "'Armed Group' Attacks Land Registration Office"] "during which protestors set fire to the Land Registration Office in the Umm Baddah quarter west of Omdurman," according to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 10 March. The London expatriate daily also reported that, according to Sudan's official daily AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH, the detainees, residents of the Angola shanty town which is slated for government removal, "are being questioned and accused of harming public security." Sharaf-al-Din Banqa, the housing minister in the state of Khartoum, "denounced" the riots, describing them as "unjustified." He also said, after visiting the site, that "the burning of about 6,000 documents will not affect redevelopment operations in the region."

Tunisia

Normalization of Israeli Ties Reportedly Delayed

MM2903134895 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 26 Mar-1 Apr 95 p 24

[Unattributed report: "Tunisia Has Been Persuaded To Postpone Establishment of Diplomatic Relations With Israel"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Well-informed Tunisian diplomatic sources have said that Tunisia informed Israel last week of its final refusal to normalize diplomatic relations between the two countries or to open joint liaison offices at present. And it requested the cancellation of the visit of an Israeli Foreign Ministry delegation, which planned to go to Tunisia at the end of this month to supervise the opening of an Israeli liaison office in the Tunisian capital.

Sources at the Tunisian Embassy in Cairo said in statements to AL-MAJALLAH that the Tunisian position is final, since "we refused to set an alternative date for the establishment of relations through liaison offices. The Tunisian orientation is to refuse to establish these relations at present, namely before the Arab League reaches a unanimous Arab decision in this connection."

Meanwhile, AL-MAJALLAH has learned that the OAU Secretariat General, headed by Salem Ahmad Salem, has recently sent an urgent letter to the Tunisian Government which included the member states' thanks to Tunisia for its decision to indefinitely postpone its previous decision on establishing relations with Israel and to await Arab and African decisions in this connection.

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Bahrain

Opposition Says Protests Continue, Foreigners Safe

JN2903184095 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 29 MAR 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The London-based Movement of Bahrain Freemen [harakat ahrar al-bahrayn] has reassured foreigners in Bahrain that they are not threatened by the violent demonstrations that are shaking the country. The movement said in a statement that the struggle for democracy and human rights will continue and escalate, but the movement will always be careful that none of Bahrain's guests will be harmed.

The Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, whose leadership is stationed in Beirut and London, said in a statement we received today that male and female students from al-Sakhir University staged a mammoth peaceful demonstration today, raising slogans in support of activating the constitution and the elected national assembly.

Several schools in Bahrain continue to observe a strike in support of popular demands and in protest against the killing of their colleague Hamid Qasim and al-Dirazi, who fell in the al-Diraz village, according the front's statement that we received.

The Bahraini press did not mention these demonstrations with the exception of the pro-government AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ which indirectly alluded to them today in an editorial entitled: "When de Gaulle Said: No to Anarchy" an allusion to the way the late French president confronted the student demonstrations in France in May 1968. AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ said: De Gaulle's slogan was: Reform, Yes; Anarchy, No. [radio transmission interrupted for few seconds] Observers have considered this a hint on what is going on in the country, given that the authorities normally inspire editorials in government newspapers.

Kuwait

UN's Ekeus Meets With Foreign Ministry Official

LD2903153795 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1333 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 29 Mar—Foreign Ministry undersecretary Sulayman Majid al-Shahin and Rolf Ekeus, the head of the UN committee in charge of scrapping Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, have stressed the importance of emptying the region of those kind of weapons, in view of them being a factor threatening its stability and security.

In a statement to the Kuwaiti News Agency KUNA, an official source at the Foreign Ministry said that at a meeting here today al- Shahin and Ekeus discussed issues concerning the UN committee's mission in Iraq and the importance of international monitoring to guarantee security and stability in this region of the world. [passage omitted]

Ekeus had announced yesterday in Kuwait that Iraq had failed to provide convincing answers with regards to what had happened to some material that could be used to produce biological weapons.

At a news conference he said: The Iraqis have admitted that they had imported 32 tonnes of material used to produce bacteria for peaceful purposes. However, these could also be used to produce biological weapons, which are classified as weapons of mass destruction.

Ekeus will submit a detailed report to the UN Security Council on 10 April on the result of the committee's efforts to scrap Iraq's destructive weapons.

Ekeus Concludes Visit

LD3003095795 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0820 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 30 Mar, KUNA—Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the UN committee in charge of scrapping Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, left the country today at the end of his visit which lasted for three days during which he met with senior state officials. [passage omitted]

Ekeus is scheduled to submit a report to the UN Security Council on 10 April about the results of his visit to Iraq.

Three Iraqi Nationals Infiltrate Northern Border

LD2903182995 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant Colonel Dr. 'Adil Ibrahim, the director of the Interior Ministry's Public Relations Department, announced that at dawn today three Iraqi managed to infiltrate through the border. They attacked a farm near the northern border, and assaulted a 54-year-old Kuwaiti citizen, wounding him seriously after opening fire on him.

They also seized his car, stole the contents of the farm, and also succeeded in tying him up with all those working with him at the farm before escaping.

A number of workers managed to inform the al-'Abdali border post of the incident, where the wounded person was transferred to al- Jahra' hospital for treatment.

Following that, patrols from border security, police emergency services, and traffic police spread out to search for the three Iraqi perpetrators and the stolen car.

After combing the whole of the border region, the car was found near border sign No. 93 in the demilitarized zone.

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The director of the Interior Ministry's Public Relations Department said that this border attack and those provocations will be confronted with more measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the future, in addition to coordinating with the owners of farms to secure the necessary protection for them.

He pointed out that the Iraqi regime's recurring border clashes, through which it tried, from time to time, to push its agents, were aimed at destabilizing the security and stability in the border region.

Concerning the condition of the wounded man, Dr. 'Ibrahim pointed out that the condition of the wounded man was stable after the necessary surgery was carried out on him.

Oil Company, Union Reach Accord on Restructuring

LD2903162995 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1340 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 29 Mar—The Kuwait Oil Company today announced it has reached agreement with the labor union on settling the issue of restructuring jobs at the production operations departments in the north and the south.

A brief statement by an official source at the company said: To conclude the meetings held on 27 and 28 March 1995 between representatives of the company and the labor union, a meeting was held on 29 March 1995 during which the remaining points of dispute were discussed. The two sides reached agreement on the basis of which the issue of restructuring jobs at the production operations department in the north and the south was settled. [passage omitted]

Union Official Confirms Strike Over

LD2903194695 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1827 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait City, 29 Mar, (KUNA)—Muhammad al-Sirhan, chairman of the trade union at the Kuwait Oil Company [KOC], today announced that the agreement proposed by the company on the restructuring of jobs at both the production and shipping departments has been signed. Al-Sirhan told KUNA "the agreement on all outstanding points of contention, which was the reason for the workers' strike last week, was reached between the trade union and company at the today's meeting."

He pointed out that an agreement has been reached on the restructuring of all jobs at the production department which will make around 800 workers at the company better off.

As far as the shipping department is concerned, he said that an agreement has been reached on the evaluation and promotion of two posts which will allow the training and promotion of around 200 workers in the near future. [passage omitted]

Muhammad al-Sirhan pointed out, furthermore, that the strike "has been cancelled and everything will be back to normal once more." He indicated, however, that the trade union supported everything proposed at the meeting "for the sake of reaching an understanding."

But al-Sirhan gave here the following example: The two sides agreed that restructuring will be carried out over two and half years instead of the three years proposed by the company. In this he was trying to show how the trade union asserted itself. [passage omitted]

Oman

Deputy Foreign Minister, Iranian Envoy Discuss Ties

LD2903142695 Tehran IRNA in English 1348 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, March 29, IRNA—The latest developments in the Persian Gulf region and the recent meeting of the Arab League were discussed in a meeting Wednesday between Iranian ambassador to Oman, Siavash Zargar Ya'qubi, and Omani deputy foreign minister, Yusuf Bin-'Alawi.

In the meeting, both officials agreed to keep dialogue in the framework of Tehran-Muscat cooperation plan for this year.

Zargar Ya'qubi and Bin-'Alawi underlined the need for further expansion of bilateral ties in all fields. They also voiced their support for the upcoming meeting of Iran-Oman joint economic commission.

The commission is due to meet in Tehran this spring.

Saudi Arabia

U.S. Officials' Mideast Trips Termed 'Futile'

MM3003083495 Riyadh AL-RIYAD in Arabic 25 Mar 95 p 1

[Editorial: "The United States and the Aims of the Recent Visits to the Region"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. vice president and the secretaries of state and defense have been touring the region. Although a thread links their tasks despite the different approaches, and although there is no political or economic rivalry, the fact remains that the retreat of the U.S. role on the Palestinian situation, what amounts to a retreat from the position of writing off Jordan's debts, and the failure to bridge the distance between the Israeli and Syrian positions which seem to be proceeding on distant parallel lines and never meeting, show that the United States has not come up with what could be called a realistic peace policy.

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The U.S. vice president came to the region to advertise the importance of the region and to show that, as his country's second in command, he made it his first stop in his political moves. He is in agreement with the defense secretary who pointed out the dangers of the Iranian military activities in the Gulf and expressed U.S. concern about any military developments which threaten shipping or cause tensions reaching the point of military eruptions.

Christopher is the only person who is never absent from the region. His role is still conciliatory in the peace process and he has not come up with an initiative compatible with the aims of the policies of the region's states. Israel remains the party which speaks out and is listened to. Others are just treated diplomatically without approval of anything unless it favors pressure on the Arab states, not acceptance of their ideas and conditions.

Realism is desired in the face of the complexities of wars and of conflicting Arab and Israeli policies. Disappointment may ensue in a situation where nothing can be achieved so long as the security and economic situations as well as border and other issues are being made more difficult by Israel, which has turned into a foe who wants to swallow up everything without there being equal sacrifices by all parties.

Israel has acknowledged that wars are not the normal way of resolving complicated conflicts with the Arabs, but peace without awareness of its requirements and implications would be tantamount to a diplomatic war. The Arabs, who had introduced economic boycott and made military preparations as a precaution against any eventuality, knew that all visiting delegations, whether European or American, always agreed with Israel either out of fear of what is said about its influence in the lobbies of these governments or because it was considered a more trusted ally than the Arabs. Such visits, including the visits of the three U.S. figures, remain futile and ineffective because the value of any mission lies in its tangible positive influence in changing that policy. That has not happened, except intermittently as in the case of the peace between Egypt and Israel which came after the 1973 shock and war. Movement everywhere else is slow and we do not know if it will be successful or will be suspended until a crisis comes along that will dictate a change of attitudes by all parties.

Bulletin Reports U.S.-Saudi-Israeli Contacts

NC2903210695 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1940 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 29 Mar (INA)—The Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights in Najd and Hejaz has affirmed that last week's meeting at the Al Sa'ud's embassy in London between Bandar Bin-Sultan and a high-ranking U.S. CIA official dealt with the Saudi regime's recognition of the Zionist entity.

In its weekly bulletin AL-HUQUQ issued today, the committee explained that the meeting, which was attended by Zionist officials, also dealt with a full normalization of relations with the Zionist entity.

The committee added that Bandar Bin-Sultan left London for Riyad on Friday [24 March] to meet with Fahd and present to him the final deal under which Tel Aviv will guarantee the security of the ruling family.

Yemen

Salary Hikes, Economic Measures Announced

JN2903171795 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 29 Mar 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Out of the Council of Ministers' desire to rectify the economic path and reform once again the financial and economic conditions in a way that will ensure justice in distributing national wealth, closing loopholes in the face of the corrupt and those who have been used to corruption, and allowing the increase in the salaries of the state employees, public and mixed sector workers, the Armed Forces, and the security forces; and out of the Council of Ministers' confidence in the profound awareness of the steadfast people that the secessionist plot has been transferred to the economic and financial arena after it suffered abject defeat during the political and military confrontation, that the victory in this latest round of the battle is no less important than the glorious victory of 7 September, the Council of Ministers in its regular meeting held this morning under Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani, adopted a number of important measures.

These measures are aimed to narrow differences in income by raising smaller incomes by higher percentages, reducing the privileges and advantages enjoyed by senior officials, decreasing the number of embassies, reducing the number of diplomats and local employees working in diplomatic missions, closing all the military, cultural, and media attache offices abroad, and fighting corruption, smuggling, and all the negative manifestations and phenomena on the financial and administrative levels.

The Council then adopted a number of decisions in the field of administrative reform in the ministries and the various state departments and in establishments and companies.

The Council of Ministers approved the following:

1. An additional cost of living allowance for workers in the state's administrative apparatus, members of the Armed Forces and security forces, the judicial authority, the economic sector, and the pensioners. The lower grades will be given 50 percent of the current salaries and the increment must not be less than 1,000 rials per month for the employee or the soldier and must not exceed 20 percent of the salaries of high grade employees.

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2. A sum of 3 billion rials will be earmarked for augmenting the loan system through the loan banks for agricultural, industry, housing to farmers, fishermen, craftsmen, and trades people so that these sectors could obtain loan facilities that would help them improve means of production and for expanding vertically and horizontally in their activities.

3. A sum of 16 billion rials of the government expenditure in addition to 8 billion rials from the external and internal expenditure will be allocated to activate all the projects which were mentioned in the investment program.

4. The sum of 500 million rials will be allocated for remote areas.

5. The sum of 500 million rials will be alloted to provide new job opportunities.

6. Reviewing the means by which projects are implemented with the aim of raising the level of local participation in implementing them and expediting development projects implementation.

The Council of Ministers entrusted the finance minister to maintain the following allotments at the level that was followed in 1994 concerning the ministries, corporations, and the public and mixed sectors:

Additional wages and awards, relief and assistance for individuals, expenses of domestic conferences, expenses for external delegation, expenses for parties and guests, expenses for reparations and fines.

The number of members of any delegation must not exceed three and the duration of the mission should not be more than 10 days. An agreement from the Council of Ministers must be obtained before the delegations depart the country.

The Council of ministers decided to reduce the number of workers in the embassies so that the number of diplomats in the mission does not exceed five persons. Those working at the embassy must not exceed seven local employees. The military, cultural, information, health, and commercial attache offices will be canceled and the diplomatic missions will be assigned these duties in coordination between the Foreign Ministry and the other ministries concerned. The foreign minister will be tasked with reducing the number of embassies and submitting a report by 1 April 1995.

The Council of Ministers also adopted a number of other measures and made decisions aimed at improving the economic, financial, and living conditions, the details of which will be carried in future newscasts.

Demonstrations After Fuel Price Hikes

JN2903204195 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 29 Mar 95

[Report by Faysal Mukarram in Sanaa]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Yemeni Government today began implementing its economic plan, beginning with measures to overcome the general budget deficit. The measures led to a 50-100 percent rise in the cost of all commodities and public utilities, and doubling the price of gasoline.

Although the people are dissatisfied with the government's treatment of the deteriorating economic and financial conditions, the situation in Yemeni towns is normal with the exception of Aden where several hundred university students and other citizens staged protest demonstration today which the security men dispersed when the demonstrations deviated from its peaceful nature. The demonstrations did not result in loss of life or property according to Aden security sources.

Following a cabinet meeting this afternoon, the Yemeni Government adopted a series of measures including big reductions in the budget so that it will not exceed the 1994 allocations. The government reduced its expenses and cut the number of diplomatic missions abroad so that the number of mission personnel may not exceed five. The government has decided to cancel the military, information, cultural, and commercial attache offices in these missions. The government also raised the employees salaries by 30 to 50 percent.

The government raised the duties on locally produced goods to 100 percent and the customs duties on imported goods by 200 percent. The government has continued to subsidize flour and wheat and did not raise the customs duties on medicine, milk, and rice.

It was noticed on the first day of implementing these decisions that the absence of monitoring supplies led to a rise in the cost of commodities, and to people's grumbling. However, the security measures are still strict for fear of disturbances.

It is worth mentioning that these measures come following an agreement between the two parties in the coalition, the General People's Congress and the Yemeni Reform Grouping. The two parties agreed to adopt these measures to stem the economic deterioration and overcome the state budget deficit this year preparatory to presenting them to the House of Representatives next Sunday [2 April] for ratification.

Demonstrations Dispersed

JN2903183495 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible security source has made the following statement to the Yemeni News Agency, SABA':

A group of citizens staged a demonstration in the Shaykh 'Uthman and Khurmah quarters in the city of Aden, as well as the city of Dhamar, this morning, exploiting the application of certain measures, which were taken by the

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government as part of the economic, financial, and administrative reform program.

Some elements slipped into this group of citizens who were demonstrating against law and order, causing chaos and breaching public security. This obliged the security forces to take the necessary measures to maintain security and protect citizens, public establishments, and private property. As a result, the gathering was dispersed calmly and without any noticeable losses.

The security men then dispersed in a disciplined and responsible way. This prevented the conspirators and spiteful elements from carrying out their destructive activity against law and order, and public and private property; stopping the democratic march in the country; and blocking economic, financial, and administrative reforms. The demonstration was aimed at keeping the homeland in a state of economic deterioration.

The security source appealed to all citizens to remain calm and vigilant and to prevent these elements from creating sedition and harming national unity, social peace, and security and stability.

Reform Grouping Accuses Partner of Violating Coalition

MM2803104895 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 26 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Iqbal 'Ali 'Abdallah: "Yemen: Reform Grouping Accuses Congress Of Violating Coalition Agreement"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sanaa—The Yemeni Reform Grouping [YRG] has accused its partner in the ruling coalition, the General People's Congress [GPC], of "working to violate the government coalition agreement signed by them last September after the Yemeni Socialist Party [YSP] pulled out of the former tripartite coalition before the war last summer."

Authoritative sources in the YRG, headed by House of Representatives Speaker Shaykh Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, have told AL-HAYAH that some ministers of the GPC, led by President Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, "have through their statements worked to violate the coalition agreement, especially Clause 3 of Article 2 which concerns obligations and stipulates that disagreements should be tackled within the framework of the coalition and the constitutional institutions in order to avert duality in terms of positions and in order not to confuse participation in power with the exercise of opposition." The sources pointed to the statement made by 'Abd-al-Qadir Ba-Jammal, deputy prime minister and planning and development minister, who is also member of the GPC General Committee (Political Bureau), in which he demanded that "the government be declared legally incompetent " The sources said that "such statements, which are made by prominent GPC ministers, confirm the defect inside the GPC leadership vis-a-vis the coalition with the YRG, especially with regard to those who were leading members of the YSP during its totalitarian rule in the south before unity." The sources added that the call for "declaring the government, headed by People's Congress Assistant Secretary General 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani, legally incompetent clearly exposes this defect, which means a violation of the government coalition agreement between the two parties." The sources stressed that the Reform Grouping "is committed to the agreement and its reform program as regards economic, financial, and administrative conditions, which was endorsed at the Shura Council (the Central Committee) early in the month despite the partner's (GPC's) differing view over it." [passage omitted]

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Minister: Jailing of U.S. Pair 'Purely Judicial'

NC3003070695 Paris AFP in English 2315 GMT 29 Mar 95

[Report by Farouk Choukri]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Baghdad, March 30 (AFP)—An Iraqi minister denied late Wednesday [29 March] that the jailing of two Americans for eight years last Saturday was politically motivated, saying their only offence was illegal entry into the country.

"Their case is not political but purely judicial," Culture and Information Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi told AFP, saying that David Daliberti and William Barloon had admitted crossing into Iraq from Kuwait before their arrest on March 13.

"As no special equipment was found on them, it was ascertained that they had illegally crossed the border with no particular motive," Hammadi said, adding, "Our laws provide for a term of imprisonment for illegal entry."

He dismissed Washington's protests that the two had strayed into Iraq by mistake and demands for their release as "nonsensical," saying they had been in a forbidden zone at 'Umm Qasr.

This region was split between Iraq and Kuwait by the United Nations in the wake of Baghdad's defeat by UN forces in the 1991 Gulf War.

Hammadi said the fuss over the jailing of the Americans was a result of a political conflict between Democrats and Republicans in the United States.

"This row and the threats made against Iraq do not help the cause of the prisoners," he warned, while asserting that the international embargo against Baghdad had not influenced their sentence.

"Embargo or no embargo, the two Americans would have suffered the same fate if our relations with the United States were good," Hammadi said. "Likewise, any Jordanian citizen who crossed the border into Iraq deliberately or by mistake would have been treated the same way."

"The case of the two Americans must be dealt with in a civilised manner and not exploited in the contest between the Republican and Democrat parties if Washington wants to obtain their release quickly," he warned, without giving details.

Earlier Wednesday a Polish diplomat who visited the Americans said they could appeal against their eight-year sentence.

"According to Iraqi law, all the legal steps which can be taken will be taken to defend them," Ryszard Krystosik told AFP when asked if an appeal would be made.

An appeal has to be lodged within a month of sentencing. If it fails, only President Saddam Husayn has the power to grant a pardon.

"They are much better than they were before," Krystosik said after visiting the two American civilian defence contractors in Abu Ghurayb jail, 30 kilometres (20 miles) west of Baghdad.

Poland represents US interests in Iraq following a break in relations during the Gulf War. [passage omitted]

Arab League Tries To Secure Release

NC3003083695 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 27 Mar 95 p 33

[From the "News Market" feature]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab League held contacts with the Iraqi authorities last week to obtain the release the two Americans held in Iraq after crossing the border from Kuwait.

INA Reports 'Aziz CNN Interview on U.S. Prisoners

JN2903150395 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1325 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 29 Mar (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz has denied any Iraqi intention to use the two U.S. prisoners as a pressure card or bargaining chip in the dialogue with Washington.

In an interview with a CNN correspondent in Baghdad, 'Aziz reiterated Baghdad's desire to hold a dialogue with the United States. He said: We want a dialogue for political reasons. We do not want the dispute to remain forever.

He expressed confidence that it is possible to have normal relations between Baghdad and Washington just like in the past. He said: We are not enemies of the United States.

The deputy prime minister ruled out any linkage between the issue of the two prisoners who crossed into Iraq from Kuwait and Iraq's desire for dialogue with Washington. He said: The infiltration took place only a few days ago, while we have been calling for dialogue with the United States for four years.

Tariq 'Aziz rejected the demand that the two prisoners be granted special immunity. He said such a move would raise many questions. He said he hoped the U.S. Administration and world public opinion would understand Iraq's position. He said that the two Americans are not hostages in Iraq, but prisoners who have been convicted for crossing the border of a sovereign state, noting that a legal verdict has been issued against them.

Explaining why the United States adamantly refuses to put an end to the blockade imposed on Iraq, the Iraqi official said that what concerns the U.S. Administration

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is to keep Iraq outside the oil market as long as possible to enable Saudi Arabia to export Iraq's quota of 3 million barrels per day.

The Iraqi deputy prime minister explained that Washington seeks from this action to help Saudi Arabia to pay the revenues to the U.S. Treasury in terms of paying the bills of the huge arms contracts which the U.S. Administration managed to sign with Saudi Arabia. He described that policy as immoral and as having nothing to do with human rights, democracy, or regional stability and security.

He reiterated the need to enable the UN Security Council to honor its obligations toward Iraq since Iraq has complied with the provisions of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. He said that such a conviction has become prevalent at the UN Security Council and in world public opinion.

Foreign Minister al-Sahhaf Views Regional Issues

On U.S. Resolution, British Remarks

JN3003100395 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0848 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 30 Mar (INA)—Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf has said that the open manner in which the British are exposing the suspect aims of the U.S. draft resolution facilitates the task of all fair-minded members of the Security Council to resist it and disclose its objectives.

Commenting on statements by David Hannay, British permanent representative at the UN Security Council, the foreign minister told INA: It has become quite obvious that the U.S. draft resolution aims at postponing the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, which calls for lifting the embargo imposed on Iraqi oil exports and other Iraqi goods, and at consecrating the abnormal state of rebellion in the Autonomous Region in northern Iraq.

Al-Sahhaf added that the U.S. draft resolution opens the door wide for interference in Iraq's internal affairs and seeks to obstruct the China-backed French-Russian draft resolution, which concentrates on the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. The draft resolution also creates a precedent full of conditions and restrictions prejudicing Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and imposing further restrictions on its natural right to build its economy and resume its civil economic and trade ties in accordance with international rules.

He said the British, like the Americans, have begun to behave and express their aims in an open manner, imagining that by merely blaring out some miserable allegations they can make others believe them or remain silent and not reply to them. He added: The British envoy's claim that the problem does not fall within the responsibility of the Security Council has caused great public surprise worldwide.

The foreign minister said that attempting to blame Iraq for the problem is not only a losing and exposed attempt, but the one making such false claims no longer has any pretext with which he can defend his tendentious position, which totally conflicts with the provisions of Security Council Resolution 687, particularly Paragraph 22. He indicated that the British Government's Security Council representative revealed one of the most important aims of the U.S. draft resolution when he said: It is important for the Iraqi people to understand that it is the Iraqi Government that is responsible for the problem, not the Security Council.

The foreign minister said that this exposed talk calls for surprise because it means the British are no longer capable of covering or camouflaging their real aims. They have begun to speak in an open manner, thinking or imagining that the people of Iraq do not understand facts or their rights and that they do not know who is blocking and plotting against these rights.

Concluding, the foreign minister said: We are surprised at how the British can in such an open manner belittle the intelligence of the people of Iraq. They were supposed to have tested the Iraqi people, who intelligently discovered in the early 1920s that the claim by General Maude, commander of the British colonialist expedition against Iraq, that the British armies entered Iraq as a liberators and not conquerors was only a cover for the realization of colonialist aims through occupation.

The following is the text of the foreign minister's statement: On 27 March, journalists at the United Nations posed four questions to David Hannay, Britain's representative at the UN Security Council, on the new U.S. draft resolution. In his answer to these questions, the British representative claimed that he has not heard any Iraqi reply to the aforementioned draft resolution when he said: It is important for the Iraqi people to understand that it is the Iraqi Government that is responsible for the problem, not the Security Council. After this, the British representative said that he does not believe that the Iraqis will reply as long as the draft resolution has not yet been distributed.

Commenting on the British representative's answers, the foreign minister said: The British Government's Security Council representative revealed one of the most important aims of the U.S. draft resolution when he said: It is important for the Iraqi people to understand that it is the Iraqi Government that is responsible for the problem, not the Security Council. This exposed talk calls for surprise because it means the British are no longer capable of covering or camouflaging their real aims. They began to speak in an open manner, thinking or imagining that the people of Iraq do not understand facts or their rights and that they do not know who is blocking and plotting against these rights.

We are surprised how the British can in such an open manner belittle the intelligence of the people of Iraq. They were supposed to have tested the Iraqi people, who

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intelligently discovered in the early 1920s that the claim by General Maude, commander of the British colonialist expedition against Iraq, that the British armies entered Iraq as a liberators and not conquerors was only a cover for the realization of colonialist aims through occupation.

The minister added: David Hannay, Britain's permanent representative at the UN Security Council, has involved himself and his government in another grave mistake when he claimed in his answer to the four questions that the objective of the U.S. draft resolution is to allow Iraq to export its oil in order to finance the necessary humanitarian supplies. This answer belittles the intelligence of the journalists who asked these questions, for when the French newspaper LE FIGARO's correspondent asked British Secretary of State Douglas Hurd on 15 March 1995 about the objectives of the new U.S. draft resolution to which Britain has contributed, he also said that he wanted a warning against Iraq and against President Saddam Husayn, and that the restrictions imposed on them must continue. So, this means that the objective of the aforementioned draft resolution is to maintain the blockade clamped on Iraq for evil political objectives, and not as the British representative at the Security Council claimed that the objective of the U.S. draft resolution is humanitarian.

Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf has said that the open manner in which the British are exposing the suspect aims of the U.S. draft resolution facilitates the task of all fair-minded members of the Security Council to resist it and disclose its objectives.

It has become quite obvious that the U.S. draft resolution aims at postponing the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, which calls for lifting the embargo imposed on Iraqi oil exports and other Iraqi goods, at consecrating the abnormal state of rebellion in the Autonomous Region in northern Iraq, at opening the door wide for interference in Iraq's internal affairs, and at seeking to obstruct the China-backed French-Russian draft resolution, which concentrates on the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. The draft resolution also creates a precedent full of conditions and restrictions prejudicing Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and imposing further restrictions on its natural right to build its economy and resume its civil economic and trade ties in accordance with international rules.

These are the evil objectives of the U.S. draft resolution. It clearly seems that the British, like the Americans, have begun to behave and express their aims in an open manner, imagining that by merely blaring out some miserable allegations they can make others believe them or remain silent and not reply to them. The British envoy's claim that the problem does not fall within the responsibility of the Security Council has caused great surprise around the world. Attempting to blame Iraq for the problem is not only a losing and exposed attempt; the one making such false claims no longer has any pretext with which he can defend his tendentious position, which totally conflicts with the provisions of Security Council Resolution 687, particularly Paragraph 22.

On U.S. Claims, Turkish 'Invasion'

NC2903154595 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 26 Mar 95 p 5

[Interview with Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf by Sana' al-Sa'id; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Sa'id] There are fears that Rolf Ekeus, who is now in Baghdad, will use the issue of bacteriological weapons as an excuse in his report to the Security Council for not lifting the siege of Iraq.

[Al-Sahhaf] First, Iraq does not have bacteriological weapons. Ekeus and the Americans know that Iraq does not have such a military program. Ekeus had some definite points that he wanted to clarify with Iraq. We worked with him to clarify them and fill the gap on alleged information that had reached him from other parties in the intelligence services, especially the U.S. one.

[Al-Sa'id] It is said that Iraq has large quantities of vaccines that are totally allocated for the bacteriological weapons program.

[Al-Sahhaf] We bought 30 tons of unicellular "protein" in 1988 and this was used in agriculture, hospitals, and clinics, by doctors, and for animals. We still have more than 15 tons of unused protein because its shelf life expired in 1993 and it is not fit for use.

[Al-Sa'id] It is said that you have recently bought vaccines.

[Al-Sahhaf] No. This has not happened, though we are in dire need of vaccines and serums. The United States is trying to exploit this issue and is building lies around it in order to serve its political purposes. But the UN committee and many technicians realize that this talk is not true. The visit by Ekeus and others to Baghdad is meant to continue action to expose these lies.

[Al-Sa'id] But what if Ekeus, chairman of the UN committee, uses the issue of bacteriological weapons as an excuse in his report to the Security Council next month?

[Al-Sahhaf] He cannot take anything as an excuse without proving its validity. He himself has become very worried by the U.S. pressure and incitement, which have no scientific or technical basis. The UN committee is working according to this base. U.S. pressure will make the committee lose all its values and credibility. The committee members are not idiots to believe the U.S. claims.

[Al-Sa'id] U.S. officials recently showed pictures confirming that Iraq is once again building weapons of mass destruction.

[Al-Sahhaf] The UN committee replied to them at that time. It said: These pictures and this information are totally wrong. The pictures shown were of water treatment facilities.

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[Al-Sa'id] What about the "al-Habbaniyah complex" which Madeleine Albright said could be turned into a complex for producing chemical weapons?

[Al-Sahhaf] They are liars. The Americans have become ridiculous, though their country is the sole power in the world today.

[Al-Sa'id] Regarding the Turkish military operation in Iraqi territories, Turkey recently claimed that Baghdad was one of the capitals that was told beforehand of the invasion.

[Al-Sahhaf] That is not true. We were surprised by the invasion, which we condemn and denounce because it is a violation of Iraq's sovereignty. Therefore, we are demanding their immediate withdrawal. Besides, the operation is not in line with the Turkish officials' expressions of the desire to have relations between Turkey and Iraq based on good-neighborliness and economic cooperation.

[Al-Sa'id] Turkey might use the 1984 agreement, which permitted Turkey to chase Kurdish secessionists inside Iraqi territory, to justify its invasion of Iraqi territory.

[Al-Sahhaf] No. This agreement is over and ended some time ago. It was not renewed to make it valid.

[Al-Sa'id] This means that they have no right to launch this operation?

[Al-Sahhaf] Correct. It will harm them as much as Iraq.

[Al-Sa'id] Is it not strange that this should happen in a security zone established by the United States to protect the Kurds from Iraq?

[Al-Sahhaf] God has willed it to expose the Americans to the whole world. I questioned our Turkish brothers and asked for an explanation for this U.S. logic: Why are the Kurds in Turkey terrorists and in northern Iraq angels of democracy and liberation who should be protected with bombs, missiles, and planes? Why is the United States telling the whole world that there is a danger called Shiite religious extremism threatening humanity but Iraq's Shiites are regarded as America's darlings? This duality in positions exposes this great financial power with a small brain.

[Al-Sa'id] What is the significance of the recent tours of Al Gore, Perry, and Christopher in the region, especially as the Gulf was visited by all of them?

[Al-Sahhaf] There are now two besieged countries: Iraq and the United States. I am travelling all over the world to defend my country's right to lift the unjust economic siege imposed on it. The United States is politically besieged and the reason is its peculiar interpretations of the Security Council resolutions. The officials of this superpower are travelling all over the world in an attempt to maintain the abnormal situation they have created. Their tours of the Arab countries are aimed at maintaining the oil areas as their protectorate and consolidating their presence in them. However, there is a growing Arab awareness against this, especially in Egypt, that the United States wants to milk the Gulf dry. But the countries there cannot accept this harmful hegemony which is against the region's interests.

[Al-Sa'id] The United States is using as a pretext what it calls the policy of double containment of Iraqi and Iranian threats to the Gulf countries.

[Al-Sahhaf] In politics, this is incomprehensible and unacceptable talk. This U.S. theory is unimplementable. What is actually happening is a despotic use of power which the United States is presenting in a package that it calls double containment. Actually it is no such thing. It is merely a form of harassment of independent countries. The harassment will fail because it will only increase regional tension and instability. What the United States is doing is tightening its hold on the region under false pretexts designed to make its countries afraid of Iraq and Iran. It will not succeed in doing this.

[Al-Sa'id] Which country is more of a threat to the Gulf countries: Iraq or Iran?

[Al-Sahhaf] The greatest threat to the region is the United States. It is necessary and also natural for the region's countries to try to solve their problems and be able to confront this U.S. threat.

[Al-Sa'id] The Gulf Cooperation Council, including Qatar and Oman, have urged Iraq to comply with UN resolutions.

[Al-Sahhaf] Yes, they are demanding this but at the same time, they know that Iraq implements all the resolutions and abides by them. I call on the Arabs to rise above present problems and try to tackle the problems of the future.

[Al-Sa'id] So far you have complied with one resolution only, namely recognizing Kuwait. What about the Kuwaiti POW's?

[Al-Sahhaf] We returned all the POW's in 1991: more than 6,000 persons, including Kuwaitis and U.S. nationals.

[Al-Sa'id] What about the 620 Kuwaiti POW's that you still hold?

[Al-Sahhaf] These are missing persons, not POW's. It was to an agreement based on such an understanding that Kuwait's representative Shaykh Salim al-Sabah put his signature in Geneva. He agreed that joint efforts must be made to search for missing persons. This took place under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross and in the presence of U.S., British, and French representatives. We are cooperating with them to find those missing people.

[Al-Sa'id] Do you think that conditions have progressed sufficiently to warrant the restoration of normal ties between you and the Gulf countries? When do you expect the blockade to be lifted?

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[Al-Sahhaf] We are not setting a date for the lifting of the blockade because it is a political process and a struggle against a despotic power, the United States. However, some countries' positions in the UN Security Council have changed. Additionally the majority of the world's governments favor lifting the blockade. It is the specter of U.S. pressure that is obstructing the implementation of all resolutions, even U.S.-imposed resolutions.

[Al-Sa'id] What about the current UN campaign to collect donations for Iraq that will amount to about $183 million?

[Al-Sahhaf] This is a lie. The people in charge of this affair are scoundrels. In 1993 they had $14 million which they listed as aid. Of this they deducted $9 million for salaries and administrative costs. They used the remainder to trade in the black market, in currencies, food commodities, and medicines. It is a collection of scoundrels and spies. They dress them up in blue caps and send them here and there under the UN banner.

[Al-Sa'id] What are the facts about your contacts with Israel?

[Al-Sahhaf] We have no contacts with Israel at all. We can never have relations with it. These are false rumors.

[Al-Sa'id] When will the two Americans be released?

[Al-Sahhaf] Why should they be released? They broke Iraqi law and will be subject to the penalties imposed on those who do so. They will not get special treatment.

Saddam Presides Over Revolution Council Meeting

JN3003114495 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1124 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 30 Mar (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has chaired a Revolution Command Council meeting.

The foreign minister and the minister of culture and information attended the meeting.

'Major U.S. Operation' Against Country Predicted

MM3003081695 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 29 Mar 95 p 1

[Article by 'Abd-al-Bari 'Atwan: "U.S. Impudence That Should Be Stopped"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The U.S. Government has begun to beat the drums of war, hinting at a new military strike against Iraq on the pretext of freeing two U.S. military experts who lost their way across the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border and miraculously reached the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr.

President Clinton's administration, which is looking for a cheap victory to restore some of its popularity, which has collapsed inside the country and abroad, has announced that it is going to use "aggressive" diplomacy to secure the release of the two men. However, it is not ruling out the other options. Two Republican [future presidential] candidates, namely Buchanan and Lugar, have moved into the field, urging the dispatch of aircraft carriers and all that is in the possession of the U.S. war arsenal to the Gulf to discipline Iraq and free the two infiltrators. And here is Rolf Ekeus, head of the international inspection team, colluding with these threats by announcing the failure of his negotiations in Baghdad over germ weapons—which means that his report, which he is supposed to submit to the Security Council next month regarding Iraq's nonpossession of mass-destruction weapons, will not be a positive one. It will be part of the U.S. plan to maintain the embargo.

So the stage is set for a major U.S. operation against Iraq. Its preliminary steps have started with the opposition's movements in the north and the south and the Turkish invasion of Kurdish areas. It seems that the predictions made in this connection by Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim [chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq] during his recent visits to London and Kuwait will materialize partially, if not fully. It seems that the man is inspired.

In brief, the United States has gone wild and is now in a permanent state of frenzy, and its eternal victim is Iraq and its kind and patient people. And it does not need any pretexts, as some Arabs find them for it and volunteer to skin the prey. Otherwise, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry's recent tour of the region would not have taken place. Nor would his Arab hosts have supported his statements on Iraqi deployments before he says where these deployments are or against whom. [passage omitted]

This is terrorism itself. A superpower terrorizing a small, besieged, destroyed, and starved state whose land and sovereignty are violated and on which everyone is flexing his muscles. This terrorism will generate nothing but hatred and the desire to take revenge sooner or later. Because the Iraqis are not less manly than the Somalis, nor is Saddam Husayn less gallant than Mohamed Farah Aidid, or so we hope.

What is happening to Iraq is an insult to all Arabs, including those paying billions in bribes to Turkey, France, Russia, and China to stop them demanding the lifting of the embargo on the Iraqi people. Turkey's encroachments on Iraqi territory are a prelude to encroaching on Syrian territory and cutting off water supplies to the Euphrates. Syria and all the Damascus Declaration states will discover that they wronged themselves more than they wronged Iraq when they kept silent about and supported this U.S. havoc.

We hope that these U.S. threats will not scare Iraq, and that the Iraqi leadership will realize that linking the two infiltrators with the lifting of the embargo is a grave mistake. Because the embargo issue should be tackled by the Security Council. As for the infiltration issue, it should be tackled through Iraqi laws. The United States,

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which has bought consciences, ruined the world, and displayed hypocrisy and double standards unrivaled even in the Stone Age, should be the last to criticize or cast doubt on the Iraqi judiciary and its impartiality.

'Source' Assails Brutus-Ghali's Pro-U.S. Statements

JN3003101395 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0930 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 30 Mar (INA)—A responsible source in the Ministry of Culture and Information has stated that the U.S. draft resolution contains no partial solution but many conditions and restrictions that will prevent the UN Security Council from reaching any solution, even a partial one.

Commenting on UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali's 27 March statement, the source told INA that the U.S. draft resolution first stipulates the perpetuation of the embargo on Iraq without any changes, after which it permits the export of limited quantities of Iraqi oil subject to all the conditions and restrictions enunciated in Resolutions 706 and 712, conditions the UN secretary general knows and which he previously described as unacceptable.

The source added: The most reprehensible of these conditions is the one allowing interference in Iraq's domestic affairs, and violating its sovereignty and national independence.

The responsible source voiced astonishment at the issuance of such an inaccurate statement by the UN secretary general, who is trying to promote an unjust and suspect U.S. draft resolution whose only purpose is to prevent the UN Security Council from implementing Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, which means lifting the embargo on Iraqi oil exports after Iraq has implemented all the essential and detailed requirements of this paragraph.

The source said that the UN secretary general's erroneous statement came in the form of advice. The source added: We tell those who resort to the method of giving advice to achieve other ends that Iraq does not need the advice of others to guide it to what serves its people, and that all it needs is for others to desist from conspiring against it and against the Iraqi people's interests, and avoid concluding or bargaining over dishonest deals at the expense of the Iraqi people's interests.

The source added: We were hoping that in his statement Dr. Butrus Ghali would promote support for French-Russian draft resolution, which calls for implementing Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, which means lifting the embargo on Iraqi oil export to enable Iraq to end the tribulation caused by the unjust embargo without giving in to the humiliating and rejected conditions and restrictions in the suspect U.S. draft resolution.

The source concluded: We have a right to raise a big question mark as to why the UN secretary general had made this statement, which is biased toward the suspect U.S. endeavor?

Communists Pull Out From Talabani Alliance

JN2903213095 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 16 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] The Communist Party has withdrawn from the alliance with Jalal Talabani and ordered its members who are fighting with Jalal's followers in the Chamchamal and Klar sector to pull out. Jalal Talabani had promised the communists that they would be in Karkuk within a week. However, they issued a statement saying that they will never be a tool in Jalal's hand to achieve his personal ambitions.

In another development, reports say that U.S. intelligence has given the agents in the so-called National Congress and Jalal Talabani until the end of March to enter Karkuk and Mosul and that if they failed to do so the United States would wash its hands of the region and Iraq in general.

Meanwhile, Mas'ud Barzani's followers have warned the citizens in Halabjah that Jalal Talabani's followers would soon set off a car bomb in Halabjah similar to the one they set off in Zakho recently.

Our correspondent in al-Sulaymaniyah has learned that a split has occurred among Jalal's followers after the return of Jabbar Farman, former minister of the Peshmerga, who was deported and replaced by Nashirwan. Jalal may now be compelled to deport Nashirwan to avoid an armed clash between the two men.

Turkish Incursion in North Termed 'Unacceptable'

JN2903153595 Baghdad INA in English 1030 GMT 29 Mar 95

[Unattributed article]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 29, INA—The recent Turkish incursion inside Iraq is a serious violation of Iraq's sovereignty and can not be acceptable under any pretext.

It is true that there is a security and authority vacuum in northern Iraq, but it is equally true that Turkey is partly to blame for this vacuum. Had it not [been] for the Turkish harbouring of the so-called "Hammer Force" of the US, Britain and France, the region could have enjoyed peace and stability following the recovery by Iraqi forces of all the major cities in northern Iraq.

But Turkey allowed itself to be used as a springboard for the allied forces to carry out their hostilities against Iraq from Turkish territories.

This being the case, Kurdish insurgents on both sides of the borders felt encouraged to resume their terrorist and subversive activities.

Furthermore, Turkey over the last four years have become supply routes to Iraqi Kurdish insurgents and have given them sanctuary to propagate for their secessionist tendencies.

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How can Turkey remain immune from such tendencies when it is a home to a very sizable Kurdish population? Perhaps the Turkish authorities are counting on US double-standard policy, but if events were to continue on the same pace then peoples of the West and the US will take to the street in support of the Kurdish rebels then the Clinton administration will find itself obliged to entertain US and western public opinions.

One assumes that Turkish officials need not be reminded of the numerous occasions when US and western officials were forced to swallow their words and turn their backs to their promises when things got worse.

Whatever, the special relationship between Turkey and the West, this cannot change the fact that Turkey remains a Muslim nation that may be accommodated within the European union (EU). This is why Turkey's joining of the ECC [as received] has been delayed till now.

Furthermore, US and western strategy is to destroy Islam and dismantle all major powers within the Islamic world and Turkey cannot be excluded from this strategy.

Many western and US commentators and politicians made it clear on various occasions that following the death of Communism Islam has become enemy No. 1 for what is called the Free World.

The carnage in Bosnia is part of this new US western approach towards the Muslim world.

The systematic cold blooded killing of innocent Muslim civilians in Bosnia has been going on for over two years without provoking any serious reaction from western and US governments, simply because things are acceptable so long as the victims are Muslims.

So instead of burning her own fingers Turkey's right place is to lead a prominent role in maintaining the territorial integrity of the region rather than being used as a base for foreign presence that sparked off the current security and political instability in the region.

A return to the early 1980s security arrangements between Turkey and Iraq is a better guarantee to peace and stability in the region.

Human Rights League Issues New Magazine

JN2903182095 Baghdad AL-QADISIYAH in Arabic 25 Mar 95 p 8

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The People with Rights League has issued the first issue of the SAWT AL-HAQQ [voice of truth] magazine.

The magazine covers a number of topics condemning and exposing the brutal practices of the authority taking hold of the destiny of the Kuwaiti Arab people. It reviews a number of topics, from the al-Sabah family's repressive practices, distorted decisions, and decision-making process, down to news about ordinary people, meeting places, and public indignation.

The first issue also includes a statement by the People with Rights League in London, secrets, and poems.

*State of Nation After 16 Years of Revolution

95LH0084A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 22 Jan 95 pp 32-40

[Article by Dr. Ali Nurizadeh]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an interview with ETTELA'AT, the widest circulating Iranian newspaper, Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati has defined some of Iran's foreign policy objectives. He answered questions by the newspaper's correspondent about the existing contradictions between words and deeds in important matters like Iran's relations with its neighbors and the Western states.

In his interview with ETTELA'AT on 19 December 1994, Velayati said that Iran will not accept the existence of Israel, even within its former boundaries (before the 1967 war). He said that the Islamic Republic's position is based on refusal to recognize Israel and rejection of the American-sponsored peace. The Arab states' recognition of Israel and the establishment of a semi-Palestinian state on part of the Palestinian territory will not affect the Islamic Republic's position. He also emphasized that Iran does not recognize UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Velayati refused to give a clear answer to a question by ETTELA'AT's correspondent about the peace talks between Syria and Israel and what Iran's position will be toward its strategic ally if it signs a peace treaty with Israel after the latter withdraws from the Golan. However, a few days after the publication of Velayati's interview, the newspaper JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI, which is owned by Leader of the Islamic Revolution 'Ali Khamene'i, expressed extreme concern regarding the Syrian talks with Israel. The paper said that the continuation of contacts between senior Syrian and Israeli military officers is causing concern among Syria's friends and the militant Islamic forces in Lebanon and Palestine. While expressing doubt that Syria will agree to end the state of war with Israel, the paper affirmed that the United States and its allies are exerting heavy pressure on Damascus to abandon the strategy of confrontation with Israel and join the PLO and Jordan.

In his interview with ETTELA'AT, the Iranian foreign minister described his country's relations with its Gulf neighbors as good. He said that the existing misunderstanding is transient and must be settled calmly through bilateral contacts. When the paper's correspondent referred to the Islamic Revolution's commitments toward the revolutionary forces in the area, such as Hizballah and the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria and the contradiction between the idea of "noninterference

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in the internal affairs of states" and the idea of "the need to support the Islamic liberation forces in their struggle against arrogance," which has been the policy of the Iranian regime since its establishment, Velayati explained that the West's raising of the banner of democracy represents a violation of the idea of "noninterference." When the United Nations calls on Iran to observe human rights and stop its repressive actions against the Sunni, the Kurds, the women, and the national and liberal forces in Iran, it is going beyond the limit of noninterference. Yet Iran's support for the revolutionary and liberation forces is actually support by the Iranian people of the Muslim peoples, and this is not interference. In other words, the appeal that Galindopol, the UN secretary general's personal representative for human rights in Iran, made to the Iranian leadership to stop torturing the prisoners of thought in Iran is a flagrant interference in Iran's internal affairs. Whereas, Iran's harboring of terrorists, the smuggling of weapons to some neighboring states by the Revolution Guard's intelligence service, the allocation of more than $100 million to support Hizballah and the Islamic Jihad in Lebanon, the aiding of extremist groups in Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan with money and weapons, and the establishment of pseudo organizations in Qom to liberate independent, sovereign, and internationally recognized countries having more democratic and popular governments than the government of the religious leaders in Iran—all this does not constitute a violation of the sovereignty of these states and the simplest internationally recognized principles. In fact, according to Dr. Velayati, these violations are necessary and a duty.

Regarding Iran's support for terrorism, Velayati said: "We must distinguish between Islamic liberation forces and terrorist forces. Our support does not include the terrorists. There is a sort of understanding regarding our policy in some Western countries. The leaders of these countries have realized that the Islamic Republic abides by the rules, principles, and norms of international diplomacy and relations, and, also, abides by its responsibilities toward the Islamic forces."

Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Iran's foreign policy has remained the hostage of the Iranian leadership's inability to settle the contradiction between "the revolution and the state." Engineer Mehdi Bazargan, Iran's prime minister after the revolution and a historic leader of the Iranian national movement, was the first to try to tackle the contradiction between the revolution and the state. Following the campaign of executions, physical liquidations, confiscations, and arrests, which he opposed, Bazargan went to see Khomeyni in Qom. He explained to him the problems facing his government as a result of the activity of "a group of big children and people with backward mentality, to whom your revolution gave rifles and scarfs, and now they want to change the world and export the Islamic revolution to Brazil, Australia, and other countries." He also told Khomeyni that "the actions of these people contradict our foreign policy objectives, which seek to establish relations based on cooperation, mutual respect, and noninterference in the internal affairs of all states, particularly the Arab and Islamic states."

Bazargan did not receive an immediate answer from Khomeyni on that day. The response came a few days later when his Foreign Minister Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi informed him that a group of gunmen had surrounded the Egyptian embassy in northern Tehran and that the group's leader, Hadi Ghaffari (Hizballah's commander) was addressing the attackers and calling on them to storm the embassy and detain the Egyptian diplomats. When Bazargan tried to send the police to remove the attackers and save the Egyptian diplomats, he was told that this was being done at the orders of Imam Khomeyni. Iran broke off its diplomatic relations with Egypt and the Imam ordered that the Egyptian diplomats be expelled from Iran.

A few months later, pro-Khomeyni students stormed the American embassy and detained the American diplomats for 444 days, violating diplomatic norms and Iranian traditions. When President Hashemi-Rafsanjani assumed his office, he created a feeling among Western circles that Iran would recover from the revolutionary bug. Hashemi-Rafsanjani made intensive efforts during his first term to remove the effects of the "revolution's chronic disease" from the body of the Islamic Republic, but he failed. The pragmatic physician was forced to give up such efforts at the end of his first presidential term so that he could save his seat for the second term.

About two months ago, when Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati visited Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman, the radical circles launched a campaign in the pro-Khamene'i press, casting doubt on the Foreign Ministry's policies and noting their contradiction with Khamene'i's views and Khomeyni's values and principles. When Velayati defended the outcome of his talks with the officials in Qatar and Oman, the newspaper JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI wondered whether the minister had conveyed to the Qatari and Omani officials the Islamic Republic's extreme displeasure with the two countries' contacts with Israel. Velayati's efforts and Hashemi-Rafsanjani's quick action to prevent a setback in Iran's relations with Qatar and Oman as a result of the radicals' campaigns against their policies have succeeded somewhat in calming the situation. However, all that Velayati had accomplished during his visit to Bahrain was destroyed by the Islamic Propaganda Organization, which quickly turned its propaganda guns against Bahrain, two weeks after Velayati's visit. According to a source close to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Velayati succeeded, after many years of lack of confidence between Tehran and Manama, to reassure the Bahraini Government about Iran's sincere intentions toward its Gulf neighbors and its desire to turn a new page and establish close relations. The Iranian source added: Unfortunately, with the arrival in Tehran of a statement issued by a Bahraini mullah, who studied in the al-Haqqani school in Qom

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and received a degree with excellent marks in the science of demagogy, provocation, and "revolutionary action," the Iranian leadership withdrew the commitments Velayati made to Bahrain. When Iranian Ambassador Javad Torkabadi returned to Iran for consultations , President Hashemi-Rafsanjani reiterated his government's desire to strengthen the relations with the Gulf states. (The dispatch of Torkabadi, a qualified and experienced diplomat, to Bahrain, at President Hashemi-Rafsanjani 's recommendation, was an effective step in improving the relations between the two countries.) However, the newspaper JAHAN-E ESLAM], which is published by the brother of the leader of the Islamic revolution, published an article against Bahrain on the same day.

Sixteen years after the revolution, it is difficult for an observer of Iranian affairs to come up with a definite answer about Iran's foreign policy objectives.

- Iran calls for the liquidation of Israel. Yet, according to a statement by the Israeli prime minister to the Knesset, Israel has sold huge quantities of sophisticated weapons to Iran.

- Leader of the Iranian Revolution 'Ali Khamene'i accuses Egypt and the conservative Arab states of subserviency to American policy and of trying to perpetuate Israel's existence. Yet, the Iranian Government prides itself on its distinguished relations with Oman, which was recently visited by Yitzhaq Rabin, and Qatar, which wants to supply Qatari gas to Israel.

- Six years after the Iran-Iraq war, the Iranian media still occasionally raises the issue of the Gulf states' support for Iraq. Yet, no one refers to Yemen's role in the Iran-Iraq war. During his visit to Yemen, Dr. Velayati noted the "historic ties and common views" between Iran and Yemen, but did not mention the Yemeni president's visit to the battle fronts to inspect the Yemeni volunteers who joined the Iraqi army.

- The Iranian Foreign Ministry calls for the need to ensure Iraq's territorial integrity and unity, and President Hashemi-Rafsanjani regards the support for the Iraqi people—the Sunni, Shiite, Kurdish, Arab, and even the Assyrian—as one of the landmarks of Iranian policy toward its neighbor. Yet, the Revolution Guard supplies weapons to the Kurdish Islamic Movement and Revolutionary Hizballah to fight the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (Talabani's group) to establish a pro-Iranian Kurdish mini-state in northern Iraq, similar to its previous attempt to establish a Shiite mini-state in southern Iraq.

- America is still regarded as the "big Satan." Any incident that takes place in Iran, from the spread of satellite television dishes to the collision of the car of the custodian of the Ajab Shir village's graveyard with a tree on a village street because the driver was sleepy, is regarded as a plot by the "big Satan" against the Islamic regime. Yet, the regime welcomed the U.S. State Department's statement about the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization. The newspaper of the leader of the Islamic revolution selected its largest fonts to place a main headline on its front page, saying "America Condemns Rajavi's Clique and Regards Mojahedin-e Khalq Gang as a Terrorist Group and Agent of Iraq."

- The propaganda media in Iran regards Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey, as agent of world arrogance, who stripped Turkey of its cloak and dressed it with the European hat and garment. The newspaper JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI says that Turkey's prime minister is a woman of Western looks and character and her culture is contrary to Islam and Turkish traditions. The paper notes that the Turkish fundamentalists will soon take power. It regards Najmoddin Arbakan, leader of the Islamic Welfare Party as "one of the pillars of Islamic renaissance."

Iran regards Turkey's Arbakan], Sudan's 'Umar al-Bashir, Algeria's Abbas Madani, Egypt's 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, Iraq's Baqir al-Hakim, Pakistan's Sajid Naqawi, Afghanistan's 'Abd-al-'Ali al-Mazari, Palestine's Fathi al-Shaqaqi, Lebanon's Hasan Nasrallah, and India's Kalim Siddiqi as the Imam's soldiers who carry his banner from one end of the world to the other. Yet, following his visit to Turkey, the friend and partner of Iran in the ECO Organization (the organization for economic cooperation, which includes Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and recently also Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan), Mr. Bolandian, deputy interior minister, has stated that Iran and Turkey have signed an agreement on security cooperation and on the exchange of criminals and terrorists.

"The father and the son have turned this great country into a big graveyard. Look at the prevailing corruption and the senior officials who are stealing money by the millions from this people. All that we want is to end corruption and oppression and restore the rule to the people. We are demanding a sincere government that does not include thieves, highway robbers, and people with a criminal past. We will fight anyone who steals, even one rial, from the treasury." This is what Imam Khomeyni told the Iranian people soon after he returned from exile at the end of January 1979. Khomeyni always referred to the late Shah and his father Reza Shah as "the father and the son," who, according to the founder of the Islamic Republic, had plundered the country's wealth and destroyed religion, culture, and traditions.

The Iranians still remember the verbal exchange that took place between Imam Khomeyni and Sadeq Qotbzadeh, his foreign minister in the period after the establishment of the revolutionary regime, when Qotbzadeh complained to the Imam about the interference of some mullahs and revolutionary figures in matters pertaining to Iran's foreign policy. After listening to the complaint of his adviser and good friend—whom he later condemned to death—Khomeyni calmly said: Which is better—to let the British or the American ambassadors decide our foreign policy or let Mr. Montazeri guide it?

Qotbzadeh, who always spoke frankly in his meetings with the Imam and others, replied: Perhaps in the era of

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Qajar kings, the British ambassador could have decided the course of our foreign policy. But the father and the son (Reza Shah and his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi) decided our foreign policy according to the interests of the country and the regime. During 57 years of the Pahlavi rule, no decision detrimental to Iran's interests was made. Whereas, in less than one year after the revolution, all the decisions we made concerning our relations with the world have been detrimental to Iran's interests and the future of its people.

Qotbzadeh's remarks aroused the Imam's anger. He said admonishingly: Perhaps you are hoping to turn the clock back to become the Shah's foreign minister?

Responding to Khomeyni's admonition, Qotbzadeh only said: I wish, I wish. He then left the room.

In the last week of December, 16 years after the triumph of the revolution and the ascent of its men to power, the Iranian parliament heard the stories of fraud, forgery, and financial mismanagement that took place in the Mines and Metals Ministry last year. When a journalist asked Tehran's representative in the Majles about these stories, he replied: I wish the Shah's men would come back. They stole thousands, but the Imam's men are robbing the house and its owner, and smuggling millions out.

What took place in the Iranian Majles last December regarding the actions of the minister of mines and metals, his deputies, and the ministry's under secretaries was just a small part of the story of corruption in Iran today.

Last November, the deputy governor of the Central Bank, Asghar Kashan, was arrested on charges of embezzlement and fraud. A few months earlier, the Petroleum Ministry revealed that more than 30 directors and officials in the Iranian National Oil Company and the Oil Exploration and Prospection Company had been arrested for involvement in a $700-million deal with a non-existent Canadian company (that is, a company with no location) for the drilling of a number of new oil wells in the Khuzestan province. The official press published sensational reports about the commissions the detained directors had received from the Canadian company in return for approving the deal with the Canadian company and a French-Swiss-Italian consortium headed by a relative of the late Shah. According to an official of the oil company in London, one of the detainees, named 'Alizadeh, the director of drilling, received more than $10 million. The share of the other officials ranged between $1 million and $6 million.

Mines and Metals Minister Mohammad Mahluji (a close friend of Revolution Leader 'Ali Khamene'i) was questioned in the Majles last December. Sources estimated that senior officials had received $100 million in bribes and commissions in one year. This is in addition to $80 million, which had disappeared with Deputy Minister Hojatollah Kolya'i. Hakimipur, representative of the city of Zanjan in the Majles, has voted with 97 other deputies to withdraw confidence from Mahluji. He has accused Deputy Minister Hojatollah Kolya'i of smuggling tens of millions of dollars. According to AL-MAJALLAH's investigations, Kolya'i is currently in the United States.

In a letter Kolya'i sent to Ayatollah Muqtada'i, chief of the Supreme Court, he revealed the names of 179 senior officials who had received huge commissions and bribes from foreign establishments and companies to help them conclude trade deals with the Mines and Industries Ministries. Kolya'i threatened to publish the corruption files of state leaders, including documents and photocopies of checks senior officials, their children, and relatives have received from 46 foreign companies and establishments in 1994, if the regime tries to tarnish his name or harm his relatives in Iran.

It should be recalled that toward the end of the Shah's era, the opposition published a list of 300 senior officials and the amounts of money they had transferred abroad officially or legally. The rial, under the Shah's regime, could be exchanged into foreign currency without legal restrictions, and the strength of the national currency (70 rials to the dollar) made the rial one of the 10 currencies used in world markets. Therefore, the exchange of any amount of local currency into foreign currency, such as the dollar, the pound sterling, or the German mark, was easily done through all the banks and currency changers.

Although the list published by the opposition was false and meant to stir up riots against the [former] regime, some Iranian officials, whose names appeared on the list, filed law suites to clear their reputation. However, the Shah himself admitted that the publication of this list was a clever move by the opposition to stir up the public against the monarchy and its supporters. The amount of money the opposition claimed the Shah's people transferred legally and officially abroad was less than $1 billion. Nevertheless, the millions of Iranians who demonstrated against the Shah's regime demanded that those who plundered the people's wealth and the state's treasury should be pursued and the $1 billion smuggled abroad should be returned.

There are no more traces of the Shah's men or the plunderers of the treasury in Iran. The regime's men are religious leaders, ayatollahs, and hojjat ol—Eslams or the followers of the Imam's line. The exchange of the national currency into foreign currency is subject to difficult procedures. Even a merchant cannot exchange the equivalent of $5,000 without the approval of the Central Bank and the Ministry of Commerce. The exchange rate of the rial to the dollar and to other foreign currencies fell drastically (the dollar is equal to 3,400 rials and the pound sterling is equal to 4,500 rials, compared to 130 rials before the revolution). Nevertheless, the amount of money officials transferred illegally to foreign banks in the past year is more than $2 billion, according to government newspapers.

In 1991, the director of the securities division in the Central Bank, who escaped to the United States,

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revealed that senior officials have 43 accounts in Swiss banks. In an interview with the IRTV television network in California, Iranian banker Mas'ud Khalili showed bank transfer documents involving $4.7 billion between 1988 and 1991. Fourteen members of the ruling regime in Iran and their children transferred this money to their private Swiss bank accounts.

The revolutionary regime has retrieved much of the property of the Shah's family abroad and much of the money that was smuggled abroad, because it had official documents concerning this property and funds. However, it is difficult to estimate the amount of money smuggled from Iran unofficially during the rule of the religious leaders and to determine where this money went.

A few days after the publication of the interview of 'Ataollah Mohajerani with AL-MAJALLAH, in which he discussed the possibility of amending the Constitution to allow President Hashemi-Rafsanjani to be elected for a third term in 1996, the pro-Khamene'i press launched a big campaign against Mohajerani and Dr. Hasan Ruhani, secretary of the National Security Council and deputy speaker of the Majles. According to KAYHAN, Ruhani had asked a number of researchers in the Strategic Studies Institute to study the possibility of amending the Constitution in preparation for the reelection of Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

The campaign against Mohajerani and Ruhani was so intense, it forced President Hashemi-Rafsanjani to intervene and deny the reports about his desire for reelection. He admonished his assistant for making an unauthorized statement.

Intellectual circles in Iran highly respect Mohajerani because of his liberal positions and because he constantly defends the writers, artists, and intellectuals in the face of the radicals and fanatics. According to Iranian sources, Mohajerani was shocked and extremely disappointed following President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's criticism, because the idea of a new presidential term was neither raised spontaneously nor invented by him or Ruhani. The National Security Council discussed the issue, and the majority of the members expressed support for the idea. Therefore, when Mohajerani revealed it in his interview with AL-MAJALLAH, he was not expressing his wish. The president himself agreed that his aides and advisers should circulate the idea inside and outside Iran. So, what happened?

According to an adviser of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the issue involves some secret ramifications, which cannot be revealed now. There is a thin line linking the future of the presidency with the future of marja'iyat.

Although such a statement adds to the ambiguity, several sources have noted that the failure of the government and the official religious institution to resolve the conflict about the successor to Ayatollah Golpaygani and Ayatollah Araki has led to this confusion.

When Golpaygani, the supreme marja', died, government religious circles made quick attempts to promote Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic Revolution, as a qualified successor. However, these attempts were quickly rejected by senior religious authorities and figures. Students studying in seminaries, who are personally sponsored by Khamene'i and receive monthly salaries from Khamene'i's office that exceed the salaries given by senior religious authorities like Tabataba'i al-Qomi, Ruhani, and Sistani to their students and teachers, have also refused to support Khamene'i. One of the students, Mr. Sa'idi, said: "Khamene'i is the leader of our world, but it is something else when it comes to the next world."

After some time, Khamene'i temporarily abandoned the idea of becoming the marja' and called for rallying around Ayatollah Araki, because he is the oldest among the religious authorities. In doing so, Khamene'i bought himself a chance, as Araki was unconscious most of the time and unaware of the fatwas that were issued in his name during the past year and until his death. It should be recalled in this regard that Khamene'i sent his adviser Mr. Mo'azzi to Qom to get a fatwa from Araki, prohibiting the use of satellite television dishes. Mo'azzi sat next to Araki and conveyed to him the greetings of the revolution leader and his best wishes for good health. But before Mo'azzi began talking about the dishes, Araki said: "How is my student and dear son Rohollah?" Araki was referring to Imam Khomeyni, thinking that he was still alive and living in Qom as his student.

While Araki was dying, Ayatollah Khamene'i established an office for issuing fatwas. He asked a committee of scholars to prepare his religious thesis, because the person who wins the title of marja' must have a religious thesis (a book on the principles of jurisprudence and the Shiite faith).

As soon as Araki's death was announced, supporters of the leader of the Islamic Revolution hastened to declare their support for him as the supreme marja'. In its December 1994 edition, KAYHAN, which is managed by a representative of Khamene'i, announced: "Only minutes after the death of the supreme marja', the grand Ayatollah Araki, the stronghold of scholarship and the revolution, the seminary in Qom, has declared its position, which is no different from the position of the nation, and support for the leadership of the successor of Imam Khomeyni, Grand Ayatollah Imam 'Ali Khamene'i."

For more than a month, the government press and the religious leaders associated with Khamene'i talked about Khamene'i's qualifications and his suitability for assuming the office of marja' in addition to his position as leader of the country. They used official occasions, Friday prayer sermons, the Majles, and the seminaries for this purpose. Nevertheless, the Shiite circles, inside and outside Iran, refused to support a young (56 years old) marja', thus foiling the attempt to install Khamene'i as the supreme marja'. Khamene'i is young compared to older authorities like Ayatollah Montazeri (71 years) and

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Ayatollah Hasan Tabataba'i Qomi, 85, who lives in Mashhad under house arrest. This has led the leader of the Islamic Revolution to announce that he is not a candidate to succeed Araki, because he is busy with other things. Nevertheless, he emphasized his responsibility toward the Shiites outside Iran. Then, the regime's media highlighted the names of a number of seminary teachers, such as Fazel Lankrani and vahid Khorasani, who are secondary maraje' or on a lower degree than the four senior maraje': Qomi, Ruhani, Montazeri, and Sistani who lives in Najaf.

While the security forces were intensifying the measures against Montazeri and Ayatollah Mohammad Ruhani in Qom, they launched a wide-scale campaign against the followers of Montazeri in Qom, Esfahan, and Najafabad, birthplace of the former successor of Khomeyni. Supporters of Montazeri leaked out a report that President Hashemi-Rafsanjani is a follower of Montazeri, and has been in constant touch with the rebelling shaykh. The report said that Hashemi-Rafsanjani had asked Montazeri about the issue of renewing his term and had received a positive response to his inquiry. It is still uncertain whether the report that leaked out of Montazeri's office was true or not, or that circles hoping to aggravate the differences between the president and the revolution leader were behind it. However, most circles emphasize that the rumors about Hashemi-Rafsanjani's relations with Montazeri will have a negative effect on his relations with Khamene'i.

The Iranian president, who regards the leader of revolution as someone he himself created, entered the council of experts crying and shouted at the council members: Why are you looking for a person to give him the position of the leader of the revolution, when Khamene'i is here among you? Imam Khomeyni told me several times before his death that Khamene'i is the qualified person to succeed him. Hashemi-Rafsanjani expected Khamene'i to support him in his conflict with the extremists. However, the former ally and partner, who was known for his purity of spirit, education, and love for art, literature, and music, soon became "another Khomeyni," more intransigent toward the people and the intellectuals and more tolerant and sympathetic toward the radicals and revolutionaries.

While the late Imam was content with the title of leader of the revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic and was content with giving some instructions and recommendations to government officials, his successor Khamene'i gave himself the title of the guardian of the Muslims, the leader of the revolution, and the commander in chief of the armed forces—a position Khomeyni gave up in favor of Bani Sadr and then gave it to Hashemi-Rafsanjani. Furthermore, Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who is the president of Iran according to the Constitution, soon realized that the country has another president who receives the heads and officials of foreign countries, appoints ministers and ambassadors, grants military ranks and medals, admonishes government members, questions the president of the republic, and decides, limits, implements, and cancels judgments.

The citizen's suffering as a result of the dual rule and the interference of Khamene'i in all affairs has increased in the past two years.

After Khamene'i's supporters resisted the idea of reelection of the president and amending the Constitution, a state of anxiety has prevailed in the country, in anticipation of the developments that might take place when Hashemi-Rafsanjani steps down. Hashemi-Rafsanjani himself still does not know where he will go after his term ends, and whether another person is ready to shoulder the nominal responsibility of the presidency of a country bankrupted by the revolution and burdened with debts of more than $40 billion; a country in which the number of unemployed has reached about 11 million people, and the number of drug addicts, according to official statistics, has reached about 6 million; a country whose leaders were hoping it will become another Japan before the turn of the century, and now it is competing with Bangladesh, Sudan, and Burkina Faso in poverty, backwardness, and disease; and a country in which 4 million of the best of its people, including more than 500,000 doctors, engineers, computer specialists, and nuclear physicists live abroad. While in exile in Najaf, Imam Khomeyni used to cry about the prisoners in his country. When the revolution opened the prison doors, no more than 2,000 prisoners of thought were there. Now, 16 years later, the revolution has established 87 new prisons and the number of prisoners of opinion in them is estimated at more than 70,000.

SAIRI's al-Hakim on Relations With Iran

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[Interview with SAIRI leader Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim by Dr. Najm Abd-al-Karim in the United Kingdom; date not given—first paragraph is AL-MAJALLAH introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim is the leader of the Islamic movement and a prominent Iraqi opposition leader. His political activity has been more effective and dynamic than that of his peers in the Iraqi opposition. Because of the popularity of his movement in Iraq, many people believe that he is the strongest candidate to assume power if the present regime falls. During al-Hakim's visit to Britain, AL-MAJALLAH held the following interview with him:

['Abd-al-Karim] Do foreign leaders receive you in your capacity as a religious or as a political Iraqi opposition leader? Does anyone consider you to be Saddam Husayn's replacement in a possible change in Iraq?

[Al-Hakim] I do not exactly know what intentions the brothers have in receiving me. However, I imagine that there are several reasons why doors are opened before me to meet with senior officials in the world:

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The first reason is that I am one of the people who have embarked on political activity inside Iraq. I do not represent a specific group or sect, because I am interested in the cause of all the Iraqi people. Despite my principled commitments, I have tried to make my political activity and positions all encompassing, covering all the issues in Iraq.

The second reason why senior officials receive me is my scholarly background. My father was an important religious authority who occupied a prominent place in the hearts of world leaders he dealt with. He maintained broad contacts by virtue of his religious position as one of the religious authorities. He also played an effective role in narrowing the differences among the Muslims. By the grace of God, my father brought us up in this intellectual and spiritual environment. His scholarly position gave dimension to our social and political activity. For this reason, we enjoy the respect of many political leaders in the world.

The third reason is our steadfastness and sacrifice during the good and the bad times we have faced in Iraq.

['Abd-al-Karim] Undoubtedly, your meetings with world leaders deal with the Iraqi issue. Have these meetings produced any positive results that will ultimately serve the Iraqi people in confronting the present regime in Baghdad?

[Al-Hakim] We have achieved many positive results, the most important of which was making our views clear. In our political activity, we try to explain our position toward the Iraqi people, because, being our enemy, the regime always tries to distort our positions and views. Other forces are assisting the regime in this regard to serve their own interests. We can achieve a great deal by explaining our position and views to these officials. The other point is supporting and protecting the Iraqi people. Much has been accomplished in this regard. Some of the states I visited have upgraded their positions on the protection of the Iraqi people, others maintained their positions, and others have changed their position on the issue.

['Abd-al-Karim] Why has the Iraqi opposition failed to topple the Iraqi regime after four years of international and regional blockade, which has prevented the regime from exporting most of its oil and importing most of its needs?

[Al-Hakim] The Iraqi opposition, which mainly depends on the people's activity, has faced basic problems. The first problem was the regime's brutal nature. This regime used all the repressive means to confront this opposition, particularly the Islamic opposition, which it savagely suppressed in an unprecedented manner. The second problem was that the Iraqi opposition faced an international conspiracy against it. When Saddam Husayn launched his war against Iran, the international forces stood behind him. These forces, whether political or media, were utilized to suppress and persecute the Iraqi opposition, preventing it from achieving its objectives. The third basic problem was that the Iraqi opposition was fighting in Iraq on two fronts: the first was against the regime and the second was to change the overall political situation, which has existed in Iraq since the establishment of what is called the national government. The British imposed this national government in a way to prevent the majority of the Iraqi people from having a say in the government. The Iraqi state was run by a limited number of people who were able, in one way or another, to consolidate their presence by depending on foreign forces.

The Iraqi opposition was supposed to overcome these basic problems. The third problem was the most important. We needed to end the isolation of the majority of the Iraqi people from the political arena in the past decades. The Constitution has been suspended for the past 35 years. Nevertheless, the Iraqi opposition scored its biggest success when the uprising took place in the south. The majority of the people entered the arena of political activity, which before was confined to a small number of people.

This uprising showed the Iraqi people's capability. According to confirmed statistics, about 500,000 Iraqis were killed in this uprising. Mass murders were committed in various cities. The regime used to dig long trenches, gather the citizens around, shoot them, and then bury them in these trenches. This happened in Najaf and Karbala'. Iraqis were collectively killed inside the holy mosque in Najaf and in front of Imam Husayn's tomb. Large parts of the tomb of Imam 'Ali and the tomb of Imam Husayn, grandson of the prophet, were destroyed when the regime used surface-to-surface missiles, tanks, and long-range artillery. Many cities were destroyed in this repressive and inhuman fashion. The opposition, naturally, thought of new ways to confront the repression, which exceeded all imagination. There is also the problem of the international forces besieging the regime, as you mentioned in your question. These forces are battling the regime. They have nothing to do with the Iraqi people. Their battle has something to do with their interests. They used the Gulf security issue as a pretext to achieve their interests. I think that the Iraqi people are not taken into consideration in the battle between the international forces and the Iraqi regime. Nevertheless, the Iraqi opposition was able to express and explain its views and to provide some facts to the world about the situation inside Iraq. Regrettably, no basic change has taken place in the international position toward the Iraqi people after the uprising. We were hoping that, at least, the United States and France would adopt a supportive stand. Unfortunately, the opposite happened. These states supported the regime and not the people.

['Abd-al-Karim] Did this happen directly?

[Al-Hakim] Yes, in a very direct way. These states' forces provided facilities and logistic support to the Iraqi army to suppress the uprising. Therefore, in answer to your question, I say that the opposition has not failed in the past and will not fail in the future. All it needs to succeed

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in saving Iraq is to rearrange the Iraqi house among the brothers in the opposition ranks, and this is possible.

['Abd-al-Karim] Some people charge that the uprising failed because some of those responsible for it raised pictures of Iranian religious leaders, causing fear among the international forces. And you mentioned in your previous response, and among some regional states, that Iran will export its revolution to them. What is your response to this accusation?

[Al-Hakim] This is a joke and an attempt to distort the facts. It is an unfounded accusation. The main center of the uprising was in Najaf and in the Kurdistan region. The leader of the uprising in Najaf was the late Imam al-Kho'i, a native of Najaf, who knew what was going on in Iraq. Therefore, he would not give his orders to raise flags or pictures of anyone other than Iraqi national and ideological symbols. He led the uprising until his death. He was instrumental in the release of hundreds of Kuwaiti prisoners and taking them back to Kuwait, despite all the difficulties. For this reason, Saddam Husayn took revenge on him and killed a large number of his followers.

A large number of Iraqis now live in Saudi Arabia. They are Iraqi Arabs who took refuge in Saudi Arabia. There are more than 40,000 people. None of them raised a flag or a picture of anyone other than Iraqi national symbols. If the accusers look for the truth, they will see that the uprising was suppressed because the regime was afraid that changes would take place in Iraq for the benefit of its people. Foreign forces wanted the uprising of the Iraqi people suppressed. They could not come out and say: We want to suppress the people. They look for justifications, such as raising fears about Iranian intervention and Iraq's partition. We think that the West supported the regime through its strong media. For example, the French produced a documentary about the regime's use of chemical weapons against the people during the uprising. However, they did not make this known, although one of the justifications of the war against Iraq was that it possessed chemical weapons. What have they done with this film? They stored it, and then released it several months later after the uprising was suppressed. All this was done to conceal the truth. The same happened with the Halabjah massacre, when accusing fingers were pointed at Iran. The truth, however, became known. The West does not want changes to take place in Iraq. It is dealing with Saddam in a manner that suits its own interests.

['Abd-al-Karim] Some people say that the uprising failed because it was sectarian in nature, and not all sections of the Iraqi people took part in it.

[Al-Hakim] The uprising represented all the Iraqi people's sects and races, for one simple reason: because the regime in Baghdad is the enemy of all the people. The uprising was launched by the people in the north, who are mostly Sunni, and the people in the south, who are mostly Shiite. I do not want to mention the events that prove that Muslims and non-Muslims and people from all the Iraqi political streams were involved in the uprising. The Western media, together with Saddam Husayn's media, tried to raise fear among the people. This was one of the weapons they used against the uprising. This prompted some people not to get involved in the uprising, because it appeared to them to be Shiite and Kurdish in nature.

['Abd-al-Karim] Has the Iraqi opposition formulated a plan of action following the uprising experience? Although some people say the first uprising was spontaneous and unorganized, is there a plan for another uprising?

[Al-Hakim] I must make one basic point clear. The uprising did not fail. It achieved all its objectives, which are summed up as follows: First, it manifested the identity of the Iraqi people, showing that they are a people who belong to a homeland and are proud of their religious identity, particularly their Islamic identity. It showed that the people are proud of Islam and are not prepared to give it up. Therefore, they stood up against Saddam's regime, which sought to distort the Iraqi people's sectarian identity. Second, this uprising expressed the Iraqi people's position and their absolute rejection of the regime. Third, the uprising's main objective was to let the world hear the voice of the majority of the Iraqi people. Despite the attempt to conceal what happened, this voice was so loud that the foreign media could not ignore it. It prompted the UN Security Council to issue Resolution 688.

['Abd-al-Karim] A resolution that has not been implemented yet?

[Al-Hakim] This issue will not be resolved without making the United Nations and its specialized committees support and do justice to the Iraqi people. This is what the uprising has achieved. It paved the way for the Iraqi people to carry out a concrete change in Iraq. This can only take place through resistance, which must not stop before victory is achieved. The uprising achieved positive results among the Iraqi military. We often hear about internal military activity against the regime. Anyone who examines the uprising's composition and its spontaneous nature knows that it could not topple the regime.

['Abd-al-Karim] Do you think that the Iraqi opposition will collapse when important international relations are established between the existing regime in Baghdad and the West?

[Al-Hakim] The opposition depends mainly on the people's activity inside the country, and change can only take place through such activity. The more the people escalate their activity and win outside support, the more they can make the change. Therefore, we do not think that the establishment of relations will have an effect on the escalation of opposition activity. Opposition activity exists and is escalating against the regime. We must also

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take the spiritual aspect into account. We believe in a tolerant faith, which calls on us to establish justice on this earth. The spiritual consideration demands that we continue the confrontation until victory is achieved.

Some people thought that the opposition would end with the end of the Iraqi-Iranian war. However, the opposite took place. When the war ended, the opposition against the regime escalated. It became more powerful and more rooted among the people. Therefore, it is extremely logical that a big change will take place in the overall situation in Iraq, irrespective of the normalization signs coming from France and other countries.

['Abd-al-Karim] If the Iraqi Government succeeds in breaking the political and economic blockade, do you think it will begin pursuing the opposition and liquidating its leaders as it did before?

[Al-Hakim] We believe that Saddam's regime is brutal and criminal. Therefore, to us, the word "begin" has no meaning. He began, he has continued, and he is still continuing to do what he did. I will put the question differently: If the regime were able to regain its economic hegemony and break the blockade, would it carry out another aggression against the Gulf states?

['Abd-al-Karim] Since you raised the question, what is your answer to it?

[Al-Hakim] The answer is yes. When Saddam Husayn recognized the Kuwaiti borders, his aim was not to be integrated into the international community. His aim was to get money from the sale of oil, which is his lifeline. Saddam did not show any regret or repentance. If he breaks the blockade and receives the oil money, within a short time he will begin rebuilding his army and military machine, and then he will carry out another aggression against Kuwait or Saudi Arabia. Saddam is malicious by nature, and this malicious man makes his calculations according to his malicious views.

['Abd-al-Karim] On a personal level, the Iraqi authority has imprisoned and killed some of your brothers and members of your family. It also killed your older brother Mahdi al-Hakim in Sudan. Are you not afraid you will be killed?

[Al-Hakim] I am not afraid. Such a possibility will not make me cease my activity. The possibility of death or murder exists all the time. I was targeted several times. The regime sent aircraft to attack me more than once. The issue, as far as I am concerned, is not personal. The assassination of my brother also was not personal, but was because of his activity.

Mahdi al-Hakim always felt this threat. Yet, he also had a sense of responsibility. As for the other members of my family who were killed or are being held hostage, I can only say that in the West, when some one is taken hostage for any reason, they raise hell. Yet, when an entire people like the Iraqi people are taken hostage and are held in a big prison, the world does nothing more than issue resolutions, like Resolution 688, which are not implemented. The al-Hakim family is just one section of the suffering Iraqi people. I do not want to talk about a specific family, but about my big family.

['Abd-al-Karim] Suppose Saddam Husayn gives you all the proof about his desire to achieve a reconciliation, will you accept?

[Al-Hakim] This is a hypothetical question. It is like asking a person: Will you get burned if you get to the sun, for example? We believe that the Iraqi authority cannot provide such proof. Experience shows that it could not provide such proof to the international community. This prompted some people to raise the question: Is it possible to achieve a reconciliation with Saddam if he gives the international community proof of good behavior and readiness to implement the UN resolutions? In the past four years, Saddam Husayn has failed to offer the international community, which possesses the means to exert pressure on him, any proof of his readiness to end his hostility. Even after he recognized the Kuwaiti borders, Saddam ordered that big celebrations be held in Baghdad and other cities to mark the victories in the mother of battles. Festivals and celebrations continued for more than 17 days. The Iraqi media are currently talking about the steadfastness of the Iraqi people in the Mother of Battles. Empty slogans are raised and articles are written on how Iraq imposed its will on the international community and broke the blockade. By God, how can such a person be trusted?

['Abd-al-Karim] Some people say that you totally depend on Iran and that most of your statements are no different from the Iranian Foreign Ministry's statements.

[Al-Hakim] First, we only depend on the Almighty God and the good efforts of the Iraqi people. At the same time, we are trying to establish good relations with all of Iraq's neighbors, led by Iran. I wish those people you mentioned in your question would provide facts instead of allegations.

I will correct some of the people's misconceptions. Iran is a big popular base for the Iraqis. Between 700,000 and 800,000 Iraqis now live in Iran. All of them are trying to return home. There is more than one justification for my presence among this number of Iraqis to answer those allegations. Iran has a 140-km border with Iraq. Many people live along this border. A person has to look at the map to see this fact. This border cannot be closed. Therefore, there is always a chance for contacts with the people inside Iraq. Iran was the only country that received this large number of people. Apart from Syria and Iran, no country was prepared to accept the presence of the Iraqi opposition on its territory. Therefore, it was natural and logical that our relations with Iran should be characterized by cordiality and sympathy. We are interested in establishing good relations with all the neighboring states, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Syria, Turkey, and even Jordan if suitable conditions exist. We think that we must maintain constant contact with the

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Iraqi people and have the chance to act. As for the second part of your question regarding the similarity between our statements and those of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, I deny such a claim. It is totally unfounded. Anyone who has copies of these statements, let him present them.

['Abd-al-Karim] You have denounced the positions of those states that support or appease the Iraqi regime, but have not denounced the position of the Iranian Government, which has taken steps for rapprochement with the Baghdad Government. How do you view the Tehran Government's desire to improve its relations with the Baghdad Government and the exchange of visits by senior officials?

[Al-Hakim] We do not denounce the issue of relations, but denounce the positions of Iraq's neighboring states. Iran was involved in a war with Iraq that lasted eight years. Despite the war, relations continued to exist for almost seven years. The relations' issue has another significance. The relations are maintained with the Iraqi people, because they will always be there. We denounce political relations that allow visits, the maintenance of interests, and so forth. Our position toward France, in particular, is based on the fact that France has never given any indication of its desire to establish relations with the Iraqi people. It has always been interested in establishing relations with the regime to serve its narrow financial interests. It is true that in limited moments of awareness, France did devote attention to the Iraqi people, but then quickly changed its position.

We do not forget the French Republic's position in the initiative to adopt UN Resolution 688. It put all its diplomatic weight behind it. But, regrettably, France quickly changed its position and started showing interest in the Iraqi authority.

['Abd-al-Karim] How do you explain the fact that Iraqi oil is being sold through Iranian outlets at low prices, despite the UN sanctions, and that Iran sends food to Iraq? Doesn't this cooperation only benefit the regime?

[Al-Hakim] The UN sanctions do not apply to food and medical supplies. These supplies enter Iraq officially and without problems. They also enter Iraq unofficially. Iran realizes that such supplies will ease the suffering of the Iraqi people. Easing this suffering is in the interest of Iran, because it stops the big flow of Iraqi immigrants to it. As for the oil issue, I have no information about it. As I know, Iran has emphatically denied it several times. Such accusations are leveled against Iran because it is being targeted. It has been accused of terrorism and of violating international laws and human rights. So why not add another lie, such as buying oil from the Iraqi regime?

['Abd-al-Karim] What about the Iraqi aircraft in Iran?

[Al-Hakim] The aircraft did not go to Iran out of choice. I am familiar with this issue. The aircraft went to Iran, because they had no other place to go. The pilots occasionally were asked not to land, but they refused the orders and landed, because they were being pursued, and there was no place other than Iran to escape death. A large number of the aircraft crashed and their pilots were killed while making a forced landing. For this reason, there is a dispute between Iraq and Iran about the number of destroyed aircraft.

['Abd-al-Karim] Fears have been expressed that if you come to power in Iraq, sectarian strife might break out between the Shiites and the Sunnis. Do you see yourself as a religious leader first? If yes, how do you explain your call for an Islamic government, and what kind of an Islamic government are you calling for in a country that consists of various sects?

[Al-Hakim] Before I got involved in politics, I was very active religiously in Iraq by virtue of my father Muhsin al-Hakim's position as a religious authority. It is known that the religious authority is connected to the 12 Shiite imams all over the world. Nevertheless, his doors were open to everyone. Many Sunnite scholars sought his help at certain times in Iraq's history, particularly during the chaotic period when red communism was spreading in the country and during Abd-al-Karim Qasim's era. Christian religious leaders also sought his help. The relations were close, because they felt that he defended the oppressed. He also defended the Kurds. Imam Muhsin al-Hakim issued a well-known fatwa [Islamic legal ruling], prohibiting the killing of the Kurds. This took place at a time when the regime's ulema held a conference and issued a fatwa to kill the Kurds. When Imam al-Hakim issued this fatwa, he was not discriminating between the Muslims. The essence of his fatwa was to protect the Muslims, Christians, and all Iraqis against murder and destruction. Even the nationalists sought his help when some of the political groups tried to suppress them at a certain time in history.

When Abd-al-Salam Arif tried to take revenge against the communists and went to Sayyid al-Hakim and asked him to issue a fatwa to allow the killing of communists, atheists, and unbelievers, he absolutely refused his request. He said: We cannot deal with people in this way. We might condemn the opinion of some people, but this does not mean that we must kill them. Therefore, to answer your question briefly, I will say that such apprehension is unfounded. The Iraqi people have gone beyond such ideas. The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI], which I head, represents Muslims of all sects and nationalities. We have Kurds, Turks, and Arabs. For this reason, we enjoy such relations of love and respect. I do not think that there is cause for fear of sectarian strife. Some people do not want the Iraqi people to assume their role in the political life of the country, and they conceal their intentions with such words, accusations, and rumors.

['Abd-al-Karim] Don't you think that peace between the Iranian and Iraqi Governments might weaken your opposition and the Iranian opposition in Iraq, i.e., Mojahedin-e Khalq?

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[Al-Hakim] Generally speaking, I do not think so. Some things might take place here and there. However, there is a basic difference between our situation as Iraqi opposition and those whom you called Mojahedin-e Khalq. Our movement depends on the people in general, and this people have expressed their position. Also, we are not a political party in the known sense of the word. I do not want to criticize the other parties, but we are a national movement ready to fight, and our movement cannot be stopped.

Mojahedin-e Khalq, on the other hand, is a limited and isolated political movement. The Iranians are disgusted when they hear the name of this movement. Therefore, we are different, and Iran will not compromise at our expense as guests.

['Abd-al-Karim] How do you explain your membership in the Iraqi National Congress when the United States and, most recently, U.S. President Bill Clinton, clearly stated that they support this Congress, supply it with money, and regard it as the sole legitimate representative of the Iraqi people, while Iran is adopting a hostile stand toward the United States and you and a large number of Iraqis live in Iran? This paradox requires some explanation.

[Al-Hakim] I have a few remarks on this issue. First, it must be clear that I am personally not a member of the National Congress, not because I oppose it, but because I pursue a political line that encompasses all the people. The SAIRI, which I head, is represented in the National Congress.

We think that the general idea of this Congress is to unite the Iraqi opposition in a front against the regime. This Congress may have not been able to achieve this objective, for which it was established. Perhaps there are other criticisms about the Congress. The Congress must not be judged according to the actions of some of its members. It should be judged by the opposition's overall performance and the unity of its action. We are always seeking to unite the Iraqi opposition into a single front, and, at the same time, to embrace everyone.

['Abd-al-Karim] Irrespective of where the financial support comes from or the side that sponsors this group or that, is it possible to establish an Iraqi opposition from non-Iraqi bases?

[Al-Hakim] The groups that have established links with this or that front can answer this question, because they shoulder the responsibility for it. The people and the nation must be careful regarding any attempt by suspect elements to contain and infiltrate them. The international political forces are trying to establish a single front. The Third World, which has similar concerns, should establish a broad front to serve its interests. The Iraqi citizen, who has endured a great deal, can distinguish between the genuine and devious forces. The SAIRI, which I head, for example, condemns some of the actions carried out by certain parties.

*Syrian Regime Attacked: Rapprochement Denied

95LH0092A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 24 Jan 95 pp 1, 2

[Editorial by Salah al-Mukhtar: "The Syrian Acrobat: Rabbit or Fox?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Syrian regime has mastered numerous "skills" that it relies on to gain an advantage or to ensure remaining in power at times of crisis. Some of these skills belong to what is termed as deception or acrobatics which excite viewers or, perhaps, seize their emotions and breath, especially if they reached the stage of walking on a thin tightrope without a safety net underneath to greet the body in its fall and prevent it from breaking up completely! The mastery by the Syrian regime of the double skills of proficient deception and rope games has led, in the course of a quarter of a century , to a consensus among Arabs and Arab countries that this regime lacks the minimum components of honesty, genuineness and integrity.

We offer this introduction before commenting on information published recently in the Jordanian AL-ASWAQ newspaper and attributed to a Palestinian source close to the Syrian regime that a secret meeting took place under French auspices in Paris between Mr. Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister, and 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam, vice president of the Syrian regime to bring about an Iraqi-Syrian rapprochement. Moreover, Saudi Arabia had prior knowledge of that meeting and did not oppose it, especially as the recent tripartite Alexandria summit had agreed to it!

In order for the information to have some seasoning that would be sufficient to make it sensational, the information stated that in the course of the meeting Iraq and Syria overcame the political difficulties that had been a barrier to the creation of normal relations, just as current developments in the Middle East after the peace operation had, in practical terms, overcome them.

Even if it were logical for whoever reads this item to clearly conclude that the source of the information is the Syrian regime and that the Syrian regime sought to establish that it leaked it deliberately, determining the aims of the Syrian regime that are inherent in that exposed leaking requires a pause and some thought. During the tripartite summit that took place in Alexandria, the Syrian regime surprised Arab public opinion by releasing statements during the hasty preparations for and the convening of the summit indicating that the summit would consider demanding the lifting of the embargo against Iraq. This deceived some viewers who held their breath while the Syrian acrobat, sweat pouring from his forehead, walked on a thin tightrope, as if he were doing so without a net that would save him from death should he fall!

However those viewers observed that the net is there. As a result, their approval turned into denigration and contempt for an actor who, failing to fool the viewers,

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himself falls victim to his own trickery, turning into a clown exciting laughter and derision. The Syrian representative at the Alexandria summit raised the name of Iraq as a weapon to blackmail the Gulf states, America, and the Egyptian regime and push them to slow their quick sprint towards the Zionist entity to make it correspond to Syria's movement which is tied by a thousand and one strings and in order for al-Asad to find a seat on the speeding Zionist-American train whose whistle deprives him of sleep.

Yes, the Syrian acrobat stood up to say to America, the Gulf states, and the rulers of Egypt: "If you do not unilaterally freeze your interests with the Zionist entity and cooperate with me in convincing it to return the Golan, then I will reach a settlement with Iraq." They made fun of him, applauded him pityingly, and then patted his shoulder and said to him: "Very well, but hurry up you lion [Assad in Arabic], you must jump more powerfully than the jackal, or the deer, or the mangy dog) or the bear swollen [Fahad in Arabic] by old age and disease!"

The statement of the Alexandria summit was issued and lo and behold it does not represent the more extremist interpretation of the American position towards the Iraqi people in as much as the positions of the rulers of Kuwait were adopted! We quickly observed the Syrian acrobat taking off his lion costume and putting on the costume of the rabbit who was pleased with the carrot that was presented to him!

But this rabbit-acrobat, after tiring from jumping to amuse shylock and convince him to compromise, collided with the truth. Circus members like the bear, the jackal, the deer, American donkeys and the mangy guard dog are still too miserly to favor him with brotherly support that would enable him to escape from the predicament of having to pay the price for his national and Arab betrayals. At their head is surrendering the Golan to the Zionist entity without a fight, supporting Iran's war against Iraq, and contributing actively under an official and direct American banner to the aggression against Iraq.

Yes, the mangy ageing lion is now facing his deserved fate. Arab nationalists do not accept him because he is soiled to the marrow of his bones. Likewise, agents do not accept him because he has become a valueless spent card. That is why he wanted to return once more to play the Iraqi card in the hope that the animals of the international and intra-Arab circus would take pity on him and reconsider their position towards him.

We declare in a direct and extremely clear manner that what the Syrian regime has leaked about the imaginary Paris meeting is a vile fabrication that is consistent with the degree of decline of the Syrian regime and its servitude to America and Zionism. This time around, the fabrication is stupid and completely naive as the circus animals are no longer influenced by it, just as any observer is no longer liable to be influenced when he sees that the Syrian acrobat is not walking a [tight]rope without a net!

America and its satellites, bearing the names of all the circus members to which they belong, understand beforehand the aim of the game of the rabbit of the Golan and one of the most important Arab mules which the war criminal, Norman Schwartzkopf, had mounted during the 30-nation aggression against Iraq. That is why it will not pay attention to his game and will continue on its swift march as long as the traitors and renegades who sold the fatherland, the cause and national honor for a paltry sum, and who no longer have anything that scares or alarms America, just as they no longer have anything to grant to Zionism after they had granted everything and received nothing beforehand!

Long live Palestine, Arab and free from the sea to the river.

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Rabin Visit to Germany To Resolve Ties 'Crisis'

TA3003061695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Rabin's surprise visit to Bonn was for the purpose of solving a crisis in Israel's relations with Germany. Chancellor Helmut Kohl was furious over allegations in Israel that the German Government had fostered false hopes over the case of Ron Arad in order to justify its commercial relations with Iran. Jack Katzenell reports:

Early this month, the FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG reported a breakthrough in efforts to secure the release of the Israeli Air Force navigator Ron Arad who, Israel believes, is being held in Iran. According to the prestigious German newspaper, the Iranians were offering to show a video proving that Captain Arad is alive. The story turned out to be largely untrue. There was no recently filmed video, and official sources in Israel suggest that the German Government had leaked the story in order to justify its growing commercial relations with Iran.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl was furious. According to Qol Yisra'el's reporter in Bonn, Gil Sadan, he held a heated telephone conversation with Prime Minister Rabin, and there was even talk of Kohl's canceling his visit to Israel this summer.

Yesterday Rabin canceled all his engagements in Israel and flew to the German capital accompanied by his military secretary, Major General Dani Yatom. Rabin and Kohl had a four-hour discussion last night, and in a joint communique it was said that Rabin thanked Kohl for what was called the selfless mediation of Germany and the personal support of the chancellor in the search for Ron Arad and the other missing Israeli servicemen. It was said that they also discussed the Middle East peace process, specifically the Syrian and Palestinian tracks, and the agreement with the European Community to finance the creation of new water resources for Jordan. Israel's own relations with Germany and the European Community were also discussed, and it was said that the discussion was cordial and frank and was held in an atmosphere of trust, and it was agreed that the chancellor would visit Israel in June. Prime Minister Rabin is due back in Israel.

'Surprise Trip' Causes Speculation

TA2903123895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] (Peter Hausman), a German Government spokesman, has confirmed that a meeting is indeed expected tonight between Chancellor Kohl and Prime Minister Rabin, who is currently making his way to Bonn. The prime minister is accompanied by his military adviser, Major General Dani Yatom.

The surprise trip has triggered a wave of speculation. Officially, both sides announced that Rabin and Kohl would discuss bilateral issues, the peace process, and Israel's relations with the EU. Moreover, it was emphasized to our Bonn correspondent Gil Sadan that the issue of Ron Arad would not be raised in the session.

Nevertheless, no explanation has been offered for the prime minister's hasty departure for Europe. Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres said a short while ago that Mr. Rabin's trip to Bonn is not necessarily related to Ron Arad, but at the same time noted that the issue is raised by Israel at every encounter with world leaders. Peres voiced his appreciation for Germany's efforts on the issue. He was speaking to our correspondent Dani Zaqen.

Beilin on U.S. Soldiers' Deployment on Golan

TA3003092795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin says that if Syria decides to achieve peace with Israel, this will be accomplished even without the deployment of U.S. soldiers on the Golan Heights. Dr. Beilin made these remarks in a meeting with Israeli correspondents in Washington. Our correspondent Arye Golan reports from Washington:

[Begin recording] [Golan] Ben Gilman, chairman of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, raised the issue of U.S. soldiers' deployment on the Golan in his meeting with Beilin. The latter told him he should not be overly concerned about this issue, because even a decision against the deployment of U.S. soldiers on the Golan will not prevent an Israeli-Syrian peace agreement. Later Beilin told Israeli correspondents in Washington that the Israeli right wing, which is vigorously lobbying for this issue on Capitol Hill, will not be able to stop the government policy on this issue.

[Beilin] If the U.S. Congress adopts a decision against sending U.S. soldiers to safeguard the Israeli-Syrian peace agreement even before such an agreement is reached and before Israel and Syria have asked for this, it would simply be a stupid decision. Such a decision, however, will not prevent us from reaching peace, because if Syria decides to reach peace even without the presence of U.S. soldiers on the Golan, we will achieve peace.

[Golan] During his brief U.S. visit, Beilin is yet to meet with peace talks coordinator Dennis Ross and Robert Pelletreau, a senior State Department official. Beilin will urge them to increase U.S. involvement in the Israeli-Syrian peace talks:

[Beilin] Without U.S. involvement Israel and Syria will not achieve peace. A more intensive U.S. involvement is a precondition for advancing the process.

[Golan] In his meeting with AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] leaders, Beilin will suggest that they avoid monitoring the extent to which the PLO is adhering to the agreements signed with Israel, because this is Israel's problem.

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[Beilin] I think it is our job to deal with the question of whether the PLO is adhering to the agreements signed with us or not. This is a sensitive and problematic issue. It is not an overt problem with which AIPAC can deal, and I would prefer for it to trust the Israeli Government on this issue.

[Golan] AIPAC lobbyists will probably not be overly enthusiastic about these remarks. [end recording]

China Backs War on 'Terrorism'; Education Accord Expected

TA2703131095 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 27 Mar 95 p 2

[Report by Batsheva Tsur]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] China has come out in support of Israel's position opposing all forms of terror and supporting the continuation of direct peace talks in the Middle East.

The statement was made by Deputy Premier Lee Linchang, during a meeting yesterday with Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein, who is on a visit to Beijing.

Rubinstein briefed Lee on the latest developments in the peace process, and noted that Islamic fundamentalist terror is the major stumbling block to pushing the process forward, Education Ministry spokesman Yehoshu'a 'Amishav said.

Lee replied that his government supports Israel on this point and opposes terror of all kinds. He added that, as a native of Shanghai, who had suffered personally during the war, he understands the Jewish people's feelings about the Holocaust.

He also praised the strong bonds which have developed between the two countries in the scientific and technological fields, and the cooperation between their universities.

Today, Rubinstein will sign an agreement for educational cooperation with his Chinese counterpart and will address Hebrew studies students at Beijing University.

Taiwanese President's Request To Visit Turned Down

TA2803115095 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 28 Mar 95 p 13

[Report by Hemi Shalev and David Lipkin]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Prime Minister's Office and the Foreign Ministry have succumbed to pressure from China and turned down a request by Taiwanese President Teng-hui Li to pay a short visit to Israel. It was noted, however, that the refusal applies "at this stage."

Taiwanese sources warned yesterday that its business community might regard the decision as a lack of desire on Israel's part to accept Taiwanese investors as well. If that happens, large investments worth hundreds of millions of dollars which are planned for the future and which include the purchase of Israeli stocks could be suspended.

Political sources said that from the moment Li's desire to visit Israel became known, Beijing sent messages to Jerusalem warning that such a visit would be seen as "an unfriendly act" by Israel and that it would constitute a violation of agreements that formed the basis for China's diplomatic relations with Israel.

Taiwanese sources noted that Li, who is Christian, wants to visit the holy sites and not hold any political meetings. Therefore, it is unclear why the Foreign Ministry rejected the request. The head of Taiwan's economic legation in Israel refused to comment on the incident.

Saudis Demand Israeli Pilgrims Bear Palestinian Passports

TA3003100095 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 30 Mar 95 p 8

[Report by Roni Shaqed]

[FBIS Translated Text] Saudi Arabia will allow Israeli Arabs to enter its territory in order to make their pilgrimage to Mecca only if they bear Palestinian passports.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry explained to the PLO ambassador in Riyadh that to date Israeli Arab pilgrims had been admitted as part of the quota assigned to Jordan, but would henceforth be included in the Palestinian quota.

In a meeting two days ago with Major General Oren Shahor, coordinator of activities in the territories, Jamil al-Tarifi, head of the Palestinian liaison committee for civilian affairs, requested that Israeli Arabs be allowed to bear Palestinian passports and that the Palestinian Authority be allowed to issue such passports to inhabitants of the West Bank for the purpose of the hajj to Mecca.

Maj. Gen. Shahor unequivocally informed him that Israel is absolutely opposed to issuing Palestinian passports to Israeli Arabs. As for the Arabs of the West Bank, he said an answer would be given after the matter has been examined.

Israeli Arabs have been allowed to make the hajj since the mid-1970's. They arrived in Saudi Arabia with Jordanian laissez-passers issued for that purpose. Some 3,000 Israeli Arabs had planned to travel to Saudi Arabia this year.

IDF Sources: Police Exaggerated Truck-Bomb Details

TA2903123995 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 29 Mar 95 p 9

[Report by 'Amir Rappaport and Tzvi Alush]

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[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yesterday IDF [Israel Defense Forces] sources argued that the truck bomb discovered last week in Tel Sheva' had not been booby-trapped at all, but was merely carrying a "very small" quantity of explosives from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank.

The sources criticized the Israel Police's conduct in the affair which, in their opinion, blew the issue out of all proportion. Residents of Tel Sheva', along with Knesset Member Talib al-Sani' of the Arab Democratic Party, accused the police of unnecessary incitement against the local population.

Very senior Israel Police sources reacted to the accusations, terming them "utter nonsense." According to these sources, the IDF is trying to cover up the fiasco at the Erez checkpoint, which allowed a truck loaded with dozens of kg of explosives to cross undetected.

The Israel Police's official reaction was also resolute: "We reiterate that the bomb was very powerful, whether it would have been activated from the truck or by remote control."

Participants in the meeting held last week by the prime minister, the police minister, IDF commanders, and commanders of the police's southern district, claim that the IDF representatives "tried to argue that the truck discovered near Beersheba was not, as it were, booby-trapped, but we presented them with evidence refuting their allegations."

Assistant Commander A., the bomb squad commander at national headquarters, said at the same meeting that it was proved beyond any doubt that the truck carried dozens of kg of nonstandard explosives. He added that the conductors and electric wires found aboard it prove that it was a truck bomb designed to explode at a crowded site, apparently in downtown Beersheba. [passage omitted]

Daily Quota of Trucks Allowed in From Gaza Increased

TA3003061795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The security forces have decided to increase the number of trucks carrying agricultural produce that are allowed to enter Israel daily from the Gaza Strip. A Qol Yisra'el reporter says that as of today 60 trucks will be allowed to enter Israel. The Palestinian trucks will take the produce to the Erez checkpoint, where it will be off-loaded onto Israeli trucks.

No-Confidence Motion Submitted on Security Decline

TA2903151995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Likud, Tzomet, the National Religious Party, and Moledet presented a motion of no confidence in the government over the decline in internal security. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the vote will take place in the Knesset on 3 April.

Cabinet Approves Shohat's Pension Recovery Plan

TA3003090395 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 30 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by Evelyn Gordon and Jose Rosenfeld]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The cabinet yesterday approved Finance Minister Avraham Shohat's recovery plan for the pension funds, which will enable them to meet their financial obligations and end the Histadrut's monopoly on them.

Shohat said the decision will open the way for the establishment of new pension funds, while protecting the accumulated benefits of existing pension fund members.

The funds will continue investing existing members' pension contributions in special government bonds with an above-market index-linked yield of 5.5 percent. However, the wage that determines the pension will only be allowed to rise 2 percent annually in real terms prior to January 1, 1995, and 1.75 percent thereafter.

New members' pensions will be backed by special bonds yielding 4.8 percent a year to cover 70 percent of pension contributions, while the remaining 30 percent will be invested by the fund in the capital market. The lower guaranteed yields will require members to join the funds earlier in order to receive 70 percent of their wages when reaching 65.

Shohat, addressing the Knesset on the subject later in the day, estimated the cost of the plan at about NIS [new Israeli shekel] 25 billion over the next 30 to 40 years. He explained the figure excludes the subsidy pension funds receive through bonds with above- market yields. When those are included, the cost balloons to NIS 70b. "The budgetary burden will be minimal, while the security for people will be maximal," he said.

"These decisions do not close the door on the possibility of a national pension law in the future," Shohat added. "But I think that right now, we should let things cook a little and see what happens."

Surprisingly, the plan received some positive feedback from the Likud. Gid'on Pat, who heads the Likud's economic council, said the Likud would support any plan to ensure Histadrut fund members' rights, but demanded the fund also be applied to non-Histadrut pension and provident funds. [passage omitted]

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Minister on Recognition of Palestinian Passport

JN2903190395 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister of the Interior Salamah Hammad has said that Jordan respects the Palestinian National Authority's [PNA] decision to issue Palestinian passports to its nationals.

Answering a question by the Jordanian News Agency, Hammad said: We will recognize these passports. He stressed that Jordan will not object to the Palestinian pilgrims' use of the Palestinian passport when they pass through Jordanian territories to perform the pilgrimage [in Mecca].

He said Jordan had previously provided all facilities to our brothers from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and had granted them passports to perform pilgrimage.

Undersecretary of the PNA's Ministry of Interior had earlier stated that 5,000 Palestinian pilgrims and 300 members of escorting missions will be the first to use the passport.

Al-Kabariti Receives Message From Russian Counterpart

JN2803130895 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 28 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has received a message from his Russian counterpart Andrey Kozyrev. The message dealt with bilateral ties and Mr. Kozyrev's forthcoming visit to the region.

IAF Calls For Algerian National Dialogue

JN2903140395 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 29 Mar 95 p 3

[Article by a JORDAN TIMES staff reporter]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The Islamic Action Front (IAF), which represents Jordan's mainstream Islamist movement, on Tuesday [28 March] called on the Algerian authorities to release all political detainees and launch a national dialogue to settle the country's two-year-old crisis.

The IAF also offered its good offices to mediate among the conflicting parties in Algeria saying it was in the interests of the Arab and Islamic world to end the violence in the North African country.

The front also called on the Algerian regime to accept the results of 1992 elections, which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win, but were cancelled by the Army. The FIS was subsequently outlawed and many of its supporters jailed.

The army move sparked a deep crisis in Algeria, with FIS supporters and members of other militant groups taking up arms against the regime.

Up to 30,000 people, civilians, security forces and foreign residents, are believed to have been slain in the violence since then.

The IAF's call, contained in a two-page statement made available to the JORDAN TIMES, came amid reports from Algeria that up to 800 militants were killed in a massive army operation against the dissident groups in the country.

The front's statement also came one day after senior Algerian delegation resenting the National Transitional Council, which acts as the country's parliament after the army-backed regime cancelled 1992 elections, paid a visit to Jordan seeking Amman's support for a national dialogue in the country.

"What is happening in Algeria now benefits nobody but the enemies" of Islam, said the IAF statement. "Those who have scored victories against the enemies also deserve victory against their own internal difference," it said in what appeared to be a reference to a reported infighting among the various Islamic factions in Algeria.

"We call upon everybody to shoulder their responsibility in a framework of...Arab and Islamic brotherhood," said the statement.

It denounced the Army role in Algerian politics, saying the Army's responsibility was to protect the country from external threats and not to get involved in internal politics.

The IAF said it was calling for a "general amnesty for all political prisoners," particularly for jailed FIS leaders 'Abbas Madani and 'Ali Belhadj, and "an end to the campaign of arrests and imprisonment which will only result in negative consequences."

The front said the Algerian regime should either accept the results of the 1992 elections or hold immediate new elections, "which are honest and free and in which people can have their decisive choice of a government which represent the people and will enjoy their full confidence."

The IAF statement ridiculed elections results in some Arab countries, where "one candidate gets a predetermined 99.999 per cent of the popular vote."

It said Algeria should be allowed to return to its place in the Arab and Islamic nation and "the nation's uprising and in the continuing struggle..."

"We have to respect the minds and souls of our sons," said the statement.

"We also caution our brethren in Algeria of foreign interference, particularly from France and the United States," it added.

The Jordanian party also offered its good offices to mediate the Algerian conflict.

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"We, as an Islamic party, are ready to do what we can to get Algeria out of this crisis through meetings among the conflicting parties and attempts to convince them to accept a settlement that will united the people land not separate them..."

U.S. General Visits Special Forces Command

JN2903190995 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn, the regent, has visited the Third Royal Armored Division. His highness listened to a briefing by the division's commander and officers about the duties and training of various division units.

Earlier today, the regent received the General Commander of the U.S. Central Command and the accompanying delegation when the guests paid a visit to the Special Royal Armed Forces. The U.S. officers watched live exercises of various field skills performed by the special forces.

Paper: U.S. Support for Nation Deserves Appreciation

JN2903144095 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 29 Mar 95 p 1

[Editorial: "Our Leadership and March"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanians, who have learned from their leader how to honor their word and how to express their gratitude for every bit of support, have found themselves face to face with a U.S. stand which deserves appreciation and is a fulfillment of a commitment which we feared would not be honored. Although this fear was unjustified, we, however, could not escape it. We say this while still recalling every single word uttered by President Clinton before the legislative branch at the Parliament, where promises must be kept and obligations honored. Afterward, the U.S. vice president came to Amman to reiterate the promise and commitment. It has become clear that His Majesty King Husayn's visit to Washington will be an occasion for the U.S. President and the leaders of the Congress, the majority, and minority to announce their determination to keep their promise.

What is more important than this is that the U.S. leaders have reaffirmed in every statement on this issue, that King Husayn's leadership of his country and people, as well as his well-known support for justice, peace, development, future prosperity, and moderation, have encouraged every capable party to support our country, which was able—thanks to its leadership and people—to score many achievements and to materialize its aspirations.

We must express our appreciation for the United States and its leaders for their support of our people and leadership. While receiving all this praise of King Husayn and his wisdom, we have the right to feel proud of him. The king has always been the symbol of our loftiness and free will which—thanks to King Husayn, his objectives, determination—has achieved the impossible.

Reports of Imminent Cabinet Reshuffle Denied

MM3003095295 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 29 Mar 95 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Jordan Rules Out Cabinet Reshuffle But Admits Differences Within Government"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—An official Jordanian source has denied reports of the possibility of an imminent reshuffle of Zayd Bin-Shakir's new Jordanian cabinet but he did not deny the existence of differences between ministers. The source said that these are ordinary differences which have not reached a point that would necessitate a cabinet reshuffle.

Reports had been leaked about differences within the Jordanian cabinet leading 'Izz-al-Din Ibrahim, the minister of state for premiership affairs, to stay at home. But in a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT from his home, Minister 'Izz-al-Din denied that he is staying away, adding that he is at home on a private vacation agreed with the prime minister before his departure. He denied differences between him and one of the ministers.

The same reports had also spoken of the likelihood of a cabinet reshuffle after the prime minister's return from Washington where he is accompanying King Husayn of Jordan on his current visit to the United States.

An informed source in the Jordanian prime minister's office has told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the differences between the cabinet ministers have not reached a point that would require a cabinet reshuffle and that any cabinet reshuffle decision would be a political decision not made just for ordinary reasons.

He added that differences, if they did exist, were natural differences of opinion on some local issues which do not call for a cabinet reshuffle.

Furthermore, any "lack of harmony" between some ministers can be resolved after the prime minister's return. The source stressed that the rumors about the personal conduct of some ministers are exaggerated.

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Hizballah Claims U.S. Backs Turkish Move in Iraq

NC3003074695 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0530 GMT 30 Mar 95

[Statement issued by Hizballah "on the Turkish military invasion of areas in northern Iraq"; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Turkish military intervention in northern Iraq, regardless of the pretexts and justifications, is an aggressive, unjustifiable act that threatens the security of the region, harms the sovereignty and unity of Iraqi territory, and violates human rights, particularly in light of statements issued recently revealing the intention to remain long in Iraq. This portends an U.S.-Western conspiracy, which Turkey is carrying out. The objective of this conspiracy is to reinstate the sharing of political, security, and economic influence inside Iraq after the international siege turned it into a wasteland and starved the people, and after tyrant Saddam turned it into a massive prison in which all the sons of the Muslim Iraqi people are being oppressed and humiliated.

The Hizballah statement continues: The continuing military activities and prolonged Turkish military intervention in northern Iraq will have grave consequences and negative results for the region. The Turkish Government will be unable to profit from its intervention; it will find only further disappointment and moral and material loss.

The Hizballah statement notes a belief that what increases suspicion about the operation and its targets is the flagrant support and endorsement of the operation by U.S. diplomacy, and attempts to justify it, despite empty U.S. allegations regarding preserving the sovereignty of countries and the rights of people.

The Hizballah statement confirms that the U.S. stance on intervention arouses worries about the nature and style of U.S. thinking on dealing with regional problems, particularly since the United States is a big power with destructive potential and a heavy political weight, which, when administered with this destructive mentality and [word indistinct] of credibility, could place the whole world before [word indistinct], loss of balance, start a race, and put a price on regional crises. The world will pay this price with its comfort, security, stability, and the independence of its countries and [words indistinct].

Buwayz Comments on Prospects for New President

NC2903190595 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has stated that the upcoming phase is a phase of deep and complicated political challenges which need a shrewd and experienced politician to lead the country through these political labyrinths. He affirmed that he discussed with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad in Damascus two weeks ago the expiry of the term of office [of President Ilyas al-Hirawi in November 1995] in view of Lebanon's openness and sensitivity to international and regional policies which affect in one way or another the election of a new president in Lebanon.

Buwayz said he does not oppose the amendment of the Constitution if there are national and fateful necessities and extraordinary circumstances; otherwise, there is no need for such an amendment.

Clarifying Deputy Kamil Ziyadah's remarks that he nominates him to become president, Buwayz said Ziyadah did not mean to nominate him but to suggest that this nomination is possible. This is because Lebanon has a democratic system.

Minister Buwayz's remarks came in a comprehensive dialogue with Milhim Karam, doyen of the editors association. Buwayz also discussed the situation in the south, the negotiations with Israel, Lebanese-European relations, and Lebanese-Russian relations.

Buwayz emphasized that the Israeli blockade of southern Lebanese ports has political objectives, which are to sow discord between the state and the resistance and to separate the Lebanese track from the Syrian track. He said Israel must realize that the solution of the problem of the violence in the south is linked to its withdrawal from occupied Lebanese territories.

Buwayz expressed the belief that no progress has so far been made in the Syrian-Israeli talks, progress which is linked to Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights up to the 5 June 1967 border and its acceptance of balanced security arrangements.

He noted that the extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty will be discussed in New York on 14 April at the meeting of the foreign ministers of the member states of the treaty and on 25 April at the nonaligned states meeting in Indonesia. He said the recent Arab League decision is a kind of recommendation to the Arab states regarding the stand they should adopt. [passage omitted]

Franjiyah Supports Nomination of Lahhud for President

NC2903194795 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sulayman Franjiyah, minister of municipal and rural affairs, has expressed his support for the amendment of Article 49 of the Constitution. He affirmed that he will not run for the office of the president of the Republic and that he supports the nomination of [Army Commander] General Emile Lahhud for president. [passage omitted]

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Reportage on Continuing Clashes in South

Israeli Post in Sujud Attacked

NC2903171595 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli position in Sujud came under fire from the terrorists' positions outside the border area. No casualties were caused among the soldiers manning the position, who replied with the appropriate weapons.

A device exploded on the Saydun road as a South Lebanese Army patrol was passing by this morning. One soldier was injured slightly and this did not necessitate his evacuation to hospital.

Israeli Bombardment, Blockade Continues

NC3003065295 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports from the south this morning say the Israeli forces shelled areas in the central and western sectors last night. Qasim Safa, the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent in the south, reports:

[Begin Safa recording] The outskirts of the villages of al-Mansuri, Zibqin, Kafra, Yatar, al-Hinniyah, and al-'Izziyah in the western sector came under a 155-mm artillery barrage last night originating in the enemy positions in al-Rujmayn and Tallat al- Bayyad. The bombardment was accompanied by intensive Israeli helicopter flights north of these areas and along the coast south of Tyre and up to al-Hamra' bridge. The Israeli helicopters raked the adjacent valleys and woods, concentrating on the al-Nafkhah and al-'Izziyah valleys. Groups of Lebanese Resistance pounded the enemy positions in the Tayr Harfa and al-Bayyad triangle. The enemy fired flares over the villages of the western and central sectors. At dawn today the Israeli helicopters raked the al-Litani River basin and the environs of Frun and al-Ghanduriyah. The enemy position in Tallat Bra'shit fired several shells at the outskirts of Bra'shit last night.

The Israeli naval blockade of the fishing ports in Tyre and al-Sarafand continues. An Israeli vessel is cruising Lebanese water north and south of Tyre. An Israeli gunboat directed warning shots at the coast at dawn today. The Israeli gunboats fired flares along the coast all last night. [end recording]

'Resistance' Source on Israeli Raids

NC3003063795 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0530 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Nab' al-Tasah, Jabal al-Rafi', and Wadi al-Akhdar came under shelling during the night from the enemy forces positioned in al-Zaffatah. A source from the Islamic Resistance denied claims by the enemy that it achieved its goals in air raids targeting Jabal al-Rafi' in Iqlim al-Tuffah. The source pointed out that these raids [words indistinct].

The Resistance issued a statement saying that the enemy has no option but to [words indistinct] land, air, and sea and fabricate lies and prevaricate in an attempt to raise the collapsing morale of its soldiers and Agents.

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Russian Foreign Minister Arrives in Damascus

JN2903193195 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev and his delegation arrived in Damascus this evening on a visit to the Syrian Arab Republic.

He was received at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and a number of ranking Foreign Ministry officials, the Russian ambassador in Damascus, and the Embassy staff.

In a statement to journalists, Kozyrev emphasized Syria's central and important role in this region. He said his country's relations with Syria are fraternal, historical, traditional, wide, and diversified. He said: We hope to bolster and strengthen these relations because Syria is a close friend to Russia, and the Russian people feel love and respect for the Syrian people.

Kozyrev added that Russia is concerned to advance the peace process, especially on the Syrian track, and expressed respect for the position of Syria and President Hafiz al-Asad in light of the president's great experience and knowledge of regional and international politics.

He said: We want to carry out our duty as a cosponsor of the peace process.

Asked whether he is carrying any new initiative to advance the peace process, Kozyrev said: Yes, we have some ideas that we want to present to our friends on whether there is any possibility to advance the peace process. He said that during his visit to Damascus, the bilateral friendly relations and ways to bolster them will be discussed.

Al-'Imadi, Libyan Minister Chair Joint Meeting

JN2903102195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2115 GMT 28 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The joint Syrian-Libyan committee for economic and commercial cooperation met this evening. Muhammad al-'Imadi, minister of economy and foreign trade; and al-Tahir al-Juhaymi, secretary of the General People's Committee for Economy and Foreign Trade [title as heard], chaired the meeting. [passage omitted]

At the outset of the meeting, Dr. al-'Imadi praised the ties of brotherhood and cooperation between the two sisterly countries, Syria and Libya, particularly in the field of economic cooperation and trade.

For his part, al-Juhaymi praised the steadfastness of the Syrian Arab people under President Hafiz al-Asad in the face of the challenges confronting our Arab nation. He praised his excellency's national and pan-Arab stands vis-a-vis Arab and international issues and his defense of Arab rights.

The two sides then moved to discuss and review the economic and commercial ties between the two countries and the means to open new prospects for this cooperation for the benefit of our people in both countries.

Minister: No 'Substantial Progress' in Washington

JN2903185695 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 24 Mar 95 pp 1, 26

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, Beirut, AL-ITTIHAD and news agencies—Syria has emphasized that the talks held a few days ago between its ambassador and the Israeli ambassador in Washington did not make substantial progress.

Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' told AL-ITTIHAD in Cairo that the Israeli side continues to stick to its past negative positions. [passage omitted]

In his statement to AL-ITTIHAD, al-Shar' said the negotiations last week did not make any progress, and the Israeli side did not show any flexibility to render the negotiations successful. The Israeli side continues to stick to its past negative positions and resorts to procrastination to waste time.

Al-Shar' said the recent Israeli proposals have not been welcomed by Syria because they do not meet the Syrian demands to restore the legitimate Syrian and Arab rights, and described these proposals as mere dreams and an attempt by the Israeli leaders to entertain themselves.

He said Syria rejects any conditions or partial solutions concerning the Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, and emphasizes that Israel should withdraw from all areas of the Golan first before it can ask for normalization and establishment of political or diplomatic relations. [passage omitted]

Minister Addresses Assembly on State Budget

JN2903093295 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 28 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The People's Assembly held a session this evening under Deputy Speaker Muhammad 'Adil Jamus. Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi; Dr. Salim Yasin, deputy prime minister for economic affairs; and a number of ministers attended.

The session listened to the government's financial statement on the state budget for fiscal year 1995, in which allocations amounted to 162,040 million Syrian pounds.

Finance Minister Muhammad Khalid al-Mahayni briefed the assembly members on the general features of the state budget for fiscal year 1995. He noted the current expenditure allocations, allocations for investment projects, projected taxes and customs, and projected economic benefits.

The finance minister gave an analysis on the allocations for the current expenditure in relation to wages and

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salaries and supplementary benefits, administrative expenses, transformation expenses, debts and other dues, as well as other allocations.

The finance minister said the allocation for the state's general expenses are not limited to those allocations covered only by the state's budget, but also include the current expenditure allocations of the economic public sector agencies, the local administration units, and the endowments departments. He noted that the total state general expenditure allocations for 1995 amount to 556,453 million Syrian pounds, compared to 482,161 million pounds for 1994. [passage omitted]

Labor Law With Lebanon Approved

JN2903214795 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 28 Feb 95 pp 1, 11

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus (SANA)—The People's Assembly held a session yesterday under its speaker 'Abd-al-Qadir Qaddurah which was attended by several ministers.

The session began by listening to the deputies' written questions, which were then referred to the competent ministries through the Prime Ministry.

This was followed by listening to a report by the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee calling for consideration of the draft law providing for the ratification of the labor agreement which was signed between Syria and Lebanon on 18 October 1994.

Speaking on the subject, several deputies affirmed the importance of the agreement in bolstering the existing relations and historical bonds between both fraternal countries and putting in practice what the committees have reached in fulfillment of the Treaty of Fraternity, Coordination, and Cooperation in order to develop and expand the scope of mutual cooperation in the various fields and serve common interests and objectives.

Following a discussion of the provisions of the draft draw, the Assembly approved the draft which became a law. [passage omitted]

State Organizations Receive Money for Renovation

JN3003081095 Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 12 Feb 95 p 8

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus—The cost of replacement, renovation, and development projects in Industry Ministry organizations in 1995 amounts to about 8.2 billion Syrian pounds, of which 4.371 billion pounds will cover the cost of local materials and 3.839 billion pounds, the cost of imported materials. The State Organization for Textile Industries has received the lion's share for its replacement and renovation projects. It has received 1.843 billion for local materials and 2.547 billion pounds for imported materials. The State Organization for Chemical Industries has received 941 million pounds for local materials and 292 million pounds for imported materials. The State Organization for Engineering Industries has received 40.7 million pounds, the State Organization for Cement 300 million pounds, the Laboratories Center 8 million pounds, the State Specifications Authority 8 million pounds, the State Organization for Food Industries 174 million pounds, and the State Company for Sugar 190 million pounds.

First Private Sector Sugar Refinery Approved

JN3003085095 Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 6 Mar 95 p 8

[Article by Jihad al-Na'san]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Higher Investment Council has given the green light to the establishment of the first private sector sugar company in Syria. In the past, this industry was monopolized by the public sector. This falls within the policy the council has been pursuing over the past two years to encourage the private sector to enter the world of major industries.

The MAS Economic Group has obtained the approval of the Higher Investment Council to set up a factory for refining crude sugar to white sugar with an annual processing capacity of 100,000 tonnes of crude sugar.

Firas Talas, president of the group has told TISHRIN that the council's decision was actually issued a short while ago.

The MAS Economic Group is well established in the commercial and industrial world in Syria. Its name is made up of the initial letters of the three Arabic words "Min Ajl Suriya" [For the Sake of Syria]. This is the group's favorite slogan, since it expresses its aims and ambitions, the president of the group says. Production is expected to begin in early 1997. Installation of machinery will begin early 1996. The factory will be established near the city of Tartus so as to be close to the port.

Talas expects the factory to cost about $25 million and to employ about 200 workers.

Regarding the steps that have been taken to begin work now that the permission has been obtained, Talas said: We will prepare the books of conditions and invite world tenders by 15 March at the latest.

TISHRIN has learned that 35 percent of the factory's capital will be placed for public subscription and that the price of each share will be 500 Syrian pounds. The rest of the capital will be contributed by the sons of Anwar al-'Aqqad, Samir al-Dibs, Rabi' al- Diri, and Hamzah Malas. [passage omitted]

Kuwaiti Group Offers Loan for Hamah Cement Plant

JN2903214595 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 1 Mar 95 pp 1, 11

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus (SANA)—Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi yesterday morning received Badr

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Mishari al-Humaydi, director general of the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development, and the members of his delegation. The meeting, which was attended by Minister of State for Planning Affairs Dr. 'Abd-al-Rahim Subay'i and the Kuwaiti ambassador in Damascus, dealt with the role and activities of the Kuwaiti fund.

A loan agreement was signed at the State Planning Board yesterday between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development under which the fund offered a loan of 21.2 million Kuwaiti dinars toward financing a project to expand the Hamah Cement Factory.

The loan agreement was signed for the Syrian side by Dr. Subay'i and for the fund by Badr Mishari al-Humaydi, director general of the fund. The expansion project aims at contributing toward meeting the increase in the demand for cement in Syria in the present and the future by adding a new production line, which is expected to be operational in June 1998.

The project consists of establishing a third production line in the existing factory to produce about one million tonnes of cement annually by the dry method, including the supply of mechanical and electrical equipment and the implementation of civil engineering work and an electronic control center. This is in addition to other expenses for consultation services and training.

With this agreement, the Kuwaiti fund will have offered Syria so far 248 million Kuwaiti dinars in aid.

Muslim Brotherhood Prisoners Reportedly Released

JN2803093195 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 28 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-SABIL has learned that the Syrian authorities have released 529 Muslim Brotherhood prisoners held in Syrian jails. Ninety of these prisoners were identified. AL-SABIL also learned that there will be mass releases of prisoners held in Syrian jails within the next one and a half months, that is, before 'Id al-Adha. It was observed recently that Syrian leaders have begun to speak of a pan-Arab-Islamic accord to confront the challenges facing the nation at this time in particular. President Hafiz al-Asad spoke in a speech about the need for agreement, not division, within the nation. Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam also spoke about the need for an accord between the pan-Arab and Islamic trends and the need for them to stand united to confront the challenges facing our nation.

Efforts to achieve a reconciliation between the Syrian Islamic trend and the authorities have failed in the past. It seems there is now a strong movement toward opening a new chapter in relations between the authorities and the opposition, at a time when the hostile forces are standing united to encroach on the nation. It seems that now is the right time to open such a chapter in view of the difficult conditions facing the nation, which is confronted with a Zionist-U.S. onslaught against its cultural identity.

Security Council Urged To Make NPT 'Binding'

JN2803140095 Damascus AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 25 Mar p 9

[From the "AL-THAWRAH Issues" column by 'Ali Dibu: "The Peace-Threatening Policy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab League has called on the Security Council, which is responsible for maintaining international peace and security, to guarantee the universal implementation of all the provisions of the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, away from double standards. It has also called on the Security Council to take all measures needed to realize this goal in accordance with the UN Charter provisions and to provide effective and comprehensive security guarantees to nonnuclear states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

This appeal on behalf of Arab states was prompted by the eagerness to establish peace, security, and stability in the Middle East. The process cannot continue while Israel refuses to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT], declines to discard its nuclear weapons, and insists on its occupation of Arab lands. This rejection was uttered by the Israeli prime minister and his government's officials, who believe that their possession of nuclear arms and the failure of Arabs to do so gives them a good chance to dictate their conditions through threatening the Arab parties deprived of nuclear weapons.

What attracts the attention of anyone who follows Israeli policy is the nature of the Israeli measures, which are mainly based on a conspicuous military and aggressive drive and an extensive use of weapons, as is the case in the continuous aggression against southern Lebanon and the occupied Arab territories. These measures are being implemented for exposed motives that contradict the establishment of peace and stability. Israel, however, attributes these measures to the requirements and needs of its "security," which are inevitably at the expense of Arab security requirements. Therefore, and as always, the goals of "Israel's security" can be realized only at the expense of Arab lives and security. Aggression and the logic of force are integral parts of the Zionist ideology. Israel's rulers believe that the existence of the state [Israel], which was created on usurpation and killing, is contingent on its ability to stage aggression in order to impose its existence on the Arab people. Therefore, Israel's leaders talk a great deal about war, armament, and earmarking further funds for military purposes at a time when international efforts are being exerted to make peace. Israel seeks to block these efforts and derail them from their bases through placing its security on the top of any agenda or talks. The list of Israeli security requirements is endless. However, this list includes:

Maintaining occupied Arab lands, eliminating Arab resistance wherever it may exist, retaining Israeli nuclear

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weapons, refusing to sign the NPT and forcing Arabs to sign it, preventing Arabs from possessing nuclear weapons even if this possession is intended for scientific purposes, and forcing Arabs to sign unilateral normalization treaties with it because any Arab coordination or solidarity threatens Israel's security.

The continuation of the Israeli nuclear program and Israel's refusal to join the NPT is a threat to regional security. It also undermines the credibility and universality of the NPT. Thus, the United States shoulders a special responsibility because it is a permanent member of the Security Council and because it can make signing and joining the treaty binding in order to preserve international security and peace. The fact that Israel will continue to be the only nuclear power in the Middle East threatens Arab security and drives the region into tension and danger.

Israeli Peace Maneuvers 'Destined to Failure'

JN2903164895 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 29 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Since the resumption of negotiations between the Syrian and Israeli ambassadors in Washington under U.S. patronage, Israeli officials have been leaking contradictory information on what was achieved at the negotiating table. Sometimes they speak about the discussion of what they term the principles of security arrangements, ignoring the peace principles. On other occasions, they speak about the failure to make progress, or the realization of progress. They are marketing all sorts of news about the negotiations to pressure others and to evade the peace requirements.

The latest of these Israeli officials' statements was Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres' saying: We want to reach an agreement with the Syrians, and we have previously announced that we are ready to withdraw from the Golan without defining the extent of withdrawal because we must keep a bargaining chip in our hands.

An examination of Peres' statement shows the following:

1. Israel wants to reach an agreement with Syria and not to make peace with it. There is a substantial difference between an agreement and peace. In the Israeli view, agreement means a separate deal similar to the Oslo and Wadi al-'Arabah agreements. According to Rabin's government, this deal is not bound by the terms of reference of the Madrid conference and the U.S. initiative, which considered the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 basic for the realization of a just and comprehensive peace on all tracks of the conflict.

2. Israel's concentration on security arrangements aims to black out the peace principles which Syria emphasizes, foremost of which is Israel's acceptance of full withdrawal from the occupied Golan. Peres is playing with words when he says that the problem between Israel and Syria is not restricted to withdrawal, but also concerns the nature of peace, security arrangements, and Lebanon's future. This play with words is most prominent when the Israeli foreign minister underestimates the issue of the Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders and mixes it with the nature of peace and security arrangements. When he says that we are prepared to withdraw without defining the extent of withdrawal, he is repeating Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's declaration that he is prepared for a withdrawal in the Golan and from a limited part of the Golan, in addition to other formulas through which Israel tries to evade the principle of full withdrawal from the occupied Golan in return for full peace.

3. Shim'on Peres' statement that the mere resumption of negotiations is something positive is a deliberate attempt to keep eyes shut, because positiveness is not through returning to the negotiations, but through the principles on which the negotiations were resumed. Israel's objective is to hint to the media that there is no importance in what had been emphasized during U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher tour's—that the ambassadors' talks in Washington will deal with the peace principles, which represent the basis for reaching peace, and not an agreement that swallows the peace principles and becomes one of the separate agreements and deals that conflict with the bases of the peace process and the U.S. initiative, in accordance with which this process was launched at the Madrid conference in 1991.

4. In light of the statements made by Rabin's government and Foreign Minister Peres, it can be concluded that Israel continues to maneuver and evade the requisites of peace that is based on international legitimacy and the U.S. initiative. Israel provides one piece of evidence after the other that it is not serious about reaching a just and comprehensive peace. It is making its calculations on the assumption that creating obstacles may realize strategic gains in land and security—gains that empty peace of its contents and principles, and of its elements that are based on the resolutions of international legitimacy, and change it into a mere deal or agreement that distorts peace through bargains voiced by Rabin and Peres when they say that if they define the extent of withdrawal what will be left for them? This means that their objective is not peace, because they do not believe in it and do not work for it. They want loose and ceremonial agreements that conceal their ambitions to swallow the gains they obtain through bargaining that widens the gap between the just and comprehensive peace and their positions that obstruct and reject this peace.

The Israeli maneuvers are destined to failure because they are well-known to Syria which adheres to its principled and clear position expressed by President Hafiz al-Asad when he said peace is Syria's strategic option.

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Press on Israeli Peace Stand, Land Day Anniversary

JN3003091195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 30 Mar 95

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, the newspaper AL-BA'TH reviews the obstruction of the peace process due to Israel's aggressive and expansionist policy and its evasion of the requirements of a just and comprehensive peace.

The paper says: The illusions of power, military supremacy, and the dreams of the fascist expansionist ambitions in the region have blurred the Israeli rulers' vision. What they care for now are only their interests, vanity, military arrogance, and arrogant dealing with the facts of history and geography.

The paper adds: If Israel's rulers eliminate the illusions of fascist and military supremacy, they will find that the opportunity available to them to reach a just and comprehensive peace is a historic opportunity, and that if this opportunity is lost, it might never be compensated for or repeated. The loser in this case will basically be Israel.

The paper says: A serious approach toward peace requires a sincere will and determination to remove the suspicious gaps and blanks in the Israeli approach, which conflicts with anything reasonable and logical.

The paper clarifies: The world has become sick of the Israeli rulers' repetition of peace statements that have no true content, and of the Rabin government's determination to continue its occupation of the occupied territories while, at the same time, raising the slogans of peace and pretending to be concerned about the peace process. Israel's rulers will be making a big mistake if they raise any slogans that do not serve the facts of a just and comprehensive peace based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle.

The paper stresses: The main condition for achieving progress on the Syrian track is a full Israeli withdrawal from the territories Israel occupied during the 5 June 1967 aggression. In others words, to erase the traces of that aggressive war in order to move to discussion to the post-war era.

Concluding, the paper says: Work for peace should not stem from the mentality of wars and premeditated intentions to continue expansion. If a just and comprehensive peace does not bring safety and security, then the security dictums they are talking about is only a cover to conceal their expansionist ambitions, which they have not thus far relinquished.

In its commentary, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Syria was behind the launching of the peace process. It also protected this process from the collapse Israel sought to bring about in various ways through its aggressive behavior and its failure to respond to the requirements of peace, led by a full withdrawal from the Golan, southern Lebanon, and all the occupied Arab territories.

The paper says: He who wants peace should not continue to escalate his aggression against Lebanon and its peaceful villages, and carry out the most hideous piracy against its coasts and acts of repression and terrorism in the occupied Arab territories. He who wants peace should not speak about war.

Concluding, the paper says: Israel still does not seek true peace. The current situation will not last forever, and, thus, wasting this opportunity for peace will pose the most serious threat to the future of security and stability in the region.

The newspaper TISHRIN writes on the Land Day anniversary, the anniversary of the uprising of the Palestinians on 30 March 1976 when the Palestinians confronted Israeli bullets in defense of the land and rights as an expression of adherence to the pan-Arab identity and affiliation to Palestine.

The paper says: The conflict in the region has never been over borders but over existence.

The paper adds: Israel was established on occupation, and has continued through terrorism, repression, and the killing of Arabs. By occupation, it seeks to dictate its conditions, to deny pan-Arab rights, and to consecrate its control by peddling partial solutions and separate deals that do not serve peace but entrench aggression and expansion.

The paper says: The Palestinian people who led the battles of defending the land in the Galilee, the Negev, and the Palestinian coast against occupation, renew, today, on the Land Day anniversary, the pledge to abide by their militant objectives. Through their national and pan-Arab aspirations, they embody the impermissibility of compromising on a single inch of land or an iota of rights, and loftily refuse to capitulate or relinquish rights. Palestine, the land, the people, the destiny, and the existence, is for the Arabs.

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India

H. Clinton Visit Shows 'New Interest' in Region

BK2703125295 Delhi THE PIONEER (Sunday Supplement) in English 26 Mar 95 p 7

[Article by Sunil Adam: "First Among Equals"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] As comparisons often go, it would be inappropriate in compare the visits of Jacqueline Kennedy and Mrs Hillary Clinton to the subcontinent as much as it would be inappropriate to draw parallels between the personalities of the two American First Ladies. Apart from the fact the two belong to different epochs the former symbolised the glamour and glitz of a true blue American political family, while latter represents the typical suburban upper-middle class liberal career woman, who earned her place through grit, intelligence and vision. Sending Jacqueline Kennedy to New Delhi was largely President Kennedy's way of expressing his admiration for India which he saw as the beacon of democracy in a Third World so willing to be seduced by Soviet socialism. Despite President Kennedy's clear bias in favour of India, the only reason why Jackie Kennedy stopped by in Rawalpindi was not to hurt a traditional US ally.

On the other hand, Mrs Clinton's visit, not just to Islamabad and New Delhi, but also to the other capitals of the subcontinent, is a clear expression of Washington's new interest in what was once a remote corner of the Cold War world. Washington sees South Asia today not merely as the biggest emerging market, but also as a potential theatre for conventional and nuclear conflict, not to mention social and sectarian strife warranting greater US attention. However, the so-called "even handedness" that is taking Mrs Clinton to all the contiguous South Asian countries, does not hide the fact that it is India, confidently striding into the post-Cold War international mainstream, that has prompted the Clinton Administration to send the First Lady on her first non-official [as published] goodwill mission. The growing importance of the Indian subcontinent can be also gauged from the fact that the Clinton Administration is likely to use Mrs Clinton's South Asian sojourn to revive the flagging image of her husband back home. That Mrs Clinton chose to give an interview to CNN on the eve of her South Asian tour is a pointer in that direction.

Irrespective of what her political agenda, if any, may be, Mrs Clinton's discussions and interaction with Indian policy makers, including Prime Minister Narasimha Rao are likely to have a positive bearing on US-Indian relations if the seriousness, interest and commitment that characterises every issue that she has taken during her accomplished life is any indication. [sentence as published] Mrs Clinton's non-official status will not diminish the import of likely parleys between her and her hosts.

And after all, unlike Jacqueline Kennedy, she is much more than a First Lady with an ear to the President. She herself, as commentators and cartoonists grudgingly and sometimes with undisguised nervousness acknowledge, is made of presidential timber.

It is often said that Adlai Stevenson was a great President America did not have. If an average nonsexist successful American male can muster enough courage, he would probably say the same about Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton. She owes her popularity, and probably notoriety too, not for the way she looks adoringly at her husband on public occasions, as Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush used to, but because she is a transparently intelligent woman of purpose who supports and sometimes leads her husband in the cause of public service.

During her husband's presidential campaign, when cynical mediapersons expressed concern if her image as an ambitious career woman with a mind of her own would hurt her's spouse's chances, Mrs Clinton had no hesitation in snubbing the scribes by saying: "you'd rather have me baking cookies at home."

Born and raised in a Chicago suburb, a law graduate from the prestigious Yale Law School and one among the top hundred lawyers in the United States, Mrs Clinton is probably the first feminist First Lady to move into the White House. While Jacqueline Kennedy and Rosalyn Carter were intelligent and modern women, there is a generational difference in their preoccupations that condemned them to be content in the shadows of their spouses.

Ironically, the only other First Lady that comes close to Mrs Clinton is one who preceded her by nearly two centuries: Abigail Adams, the wife of the second US President John Adams and the mother of the sixth President John Quincy Adams. Like Abigail Adams, who was not only an intellectual equal to her husband but was a protagonist of the rights of women and blacks, Mrs Clinton is an ardent, unapologetic liberal crusader even in this Reagan epoch when the L-word leads to political suicide in the US. And this is not a quality that she acquired on her way to the White House, but something that led her there.

Over two decades ago, much to the consternation of parents and a presiding Senator, the 21-year-old Hillary Rodham addressed a college graduation ceremony by saying "For too long our leaders have used politics as the art of the possible. The challenge now is to practice politics as the art of making what appears to be impossible, possible," It is not surprising that the likes of Newt Gingrich and his mother can't stand her. Even her ardent critics cannot but acknowledge that she is a natural leader of men, not domineering and overbearing, but leadership that is inspired by idealism and purpose. As the first student speaker at that fateful graduation ceremony of Wellesley college in Boston, Hillary Rodham confessed that her consciousness was shaped by "men with dreams... men in civil rights movement, the Peace Corps, the space programme."

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Today, as the First Lady, Hillary Clinton remains an inspiration to men in all those movements, and issues in America. And hopefully, even to men in the subcontinent as she embarks on her voyage of discovery.

Rao, Clinton Discuss Status of Women

BK2903160295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The first lady of the United States, Mrs. Hillary Clinton, says her country is committed to increased partnership with nongovernment organizations in India for the development of women. Delivering a lecture at the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation in New Delhi today, she said India will be the first country to benefit from the $100 million U.S. aid for girls and women's education. Mrs. Clinton said women should have a say in decisionmaking at home, workplace, community, and at the national level. Earlier, welcoming the U.S. first lady, the chairperson of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, said the foundation is committed to the concerns of women and children.

Later, Mrs. Hillary Clinton held wide-ranging discussions with the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, on social development and upliftment of women. Among the subjects that figured during their hour-long talks was the status of women in each other's country and ways and means of empowering women. Mr. Rao briefed the U.S. first lady on the steps taken by India since the fifties for political empowerment of women.

Effect on Women's Development Welcomed

BK3003051895 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 30 Mar 95

[Commentary by Anita Katiyal]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It is widely well accepted by the policy-makers that women must be placed at the center stage of all development plans if the nation on the whole is to prosper. There has been increasing realization that as long as women constituting half of the world's population are denied to access to basics like education, employment and health care, development of nations will continue to stagnate. The issue of women's social, political, and economic empowerment has, thus, assumed considerable significance the world over, particularly so in the developing countries. It was the central theme of last year's Cairo conference on population and development. Again, it was a point of discussion at the recently concluded Social Development Summit at Copenhagen. The issue will figure prominently at the upcoming international women's conference scheduled to be held in Beijing this September. Like in many third world countries, women's groups in India have also been working hard to convince planners the importance of this linkage so as to ensure reflection in the key policies.

Those championing the cause of women in development found a keen supporter in Mrs. Hillary Clinton, the U.S. first lady who has forcefully articulated their case during her current visit to Delhi. She has spoken in favor of women and children, drawing attention to the lessons of the past decades which showed where women prosper, nations prosper. She was voicing the views of a large number of women when she referred to the fact that children tend to be less educated, not well nourished, and families tend to be both larger and poorer where women are denied access to education, economic opportunities, and health facilities.

For India this must have served as a reminder of the stark realities that confront the nation today. Taking the case of education alone, it is amply clear that despite some progress over the years, gender disparities regarding the enrollment and retention of girls in educational institution is still conspicuous. It is officially acknowledged that girls still account for only 45.5 percent of the students enrolled at the primary stage. Similarly, the drop-out rate of girls estimated at 33.3 percent in rural areas alone continues to be in the high side both at the primary and middle stage. Besides, 19 to 24 million children in the age-group of 6 to 14 years are out of schools. The benefits of investing in education of girls can hardly be under estimated. The example of Kerala is there for all. It has shown how a high rate of female literacy and education has resulted in lower fertility and infant mortality rates. It also helped women to acquire greater control on their lives.

Article Views Clinton's 'All-American Confection'

BK3003082295 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 29 Mar 95 p 11

[Article by Sona Thakur under the rubric "US First Lady's Passage Through India": "Hillary leaves a trail of empty Coke cans"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, March 28—Some 30 years after Jacqueline Kennedy brought a visionary whiff of Camelot to India, another First Lady of the United States came visiting with another dream. Only, this time, it was an all-American confection of fast cars and diet coke.

Ms Hillary Rodham Clinton—with a well-scrubbed Chelsea in tow—began her three-day goodwill visit on a cliche. She cuddled babies, made the appropriate noises over a display of handicrafts and said the politically correct things about how she loved India "today, tomorrow and the day after."

All those expecting a suitably electric glimpse of that fiery feminist-activist-administrator—often described as the President-by-proxy of the USA—were disappointed. All Ms Clinton had to offer was a ritualised rite of a passage through India—marked by a trail of empty Coke cans.

For someone billed as one of the most able and sensitised minds of the American Administration, Ms Clinton was singularly insensate and solely decorative today. She did

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speak a few sentences at Prayas, a nongovernmental organisation, she visited. But it could just as well have been Lady Diana, Jane Fonda or Aishwarya Rai speaking.

"It's marvelous how people working together can help each other," she bubbled. "I'm happy to be in your ancient and exciting country," she gushed. "Children are the most important resource of any family, community or country," she prosed.

Though the First Lady herself presented an anaemic persona, the fun lay elsewhere. All around Ms Clinton in fact. Her securitymen and women—all-American prototypes in Raybans and lightweight jackets—put up a hyper-hysterical show. Frenzied as only Americans can be over security, they spent the day rushing round and about every venue, muttering urgently into their cuffs where they had tucked their minute transmitters.

Outside Mother Teresa's local establishment, one harried secret serviceman rushed out and hurriedly shuffled the parked cars. Five minutes later another equally harried one, dashed out and re-shuffled the cars. A couple of minutes later, the first man was back, talking to his shirtsleeve—"Where's Chelsea's car? I want Chelsea's car here." Another shuffle.

The security procedures Ms Clinton's team put into place bordered on the paranoiac. They flew in two cars—a Cadillac limousine and Rover, both bearing the inexplicable legend "Celebrate and Discover" on the Washington D.C. number plates—from the United States; they debarred all Indian security agents from the inner cordon thrown around the two Clintons; they sanitised a kilometre wide arc around each venue visited; and even insisted on going through the files at Mother Teresa's orphanage.

The tag about Americans being nothing but a nation of overgrown children might well have been written with Mr Clinton's staff in mind. At every stopover, one of the first items on the agenda was the unloading of massive ice-boxes. Chilled cans of Coke and its clones were passed around, swigged, and tossed away.

With, perhaps, the exception of an as-stern-as-ever Ms Robin Raphael, assistant secretary for South Asian affairs, Ms Clinton's staff were a rather juvenile lot. Obright spark brimming over with bonhomie spent several moments slapping various stengun wielding Delhi policemen on the back with a cheery "Howya doin' guys." The policemen, all Jats from Haryana, gave him a stoical look and continued staring into the distance.

After a morning spent tickling toddlers under the chin at Mother Teresa's local orphanage, Ms Clinton met some "prominent women," including Mira Nair, Mrinalini Sarabhai and Shobhana Bharatiya, for lunch at Roosevelt House, home to the US Ambassador.

She then made a tour of Prayas, an innovative school project for slum children run by the ITT [expansion unknown] faculty wives. She retired to her specially-done up hotel room at the Maurya Sheraton. The hotel has gone to great lengths to make their glamorous guest feel at home—they've done up their swankest rooms, the Chandragupta suite, in her favourite colours of yellow and white, even going so far as to colour-coordinate a bathrobe and slippers for her and flying in irises and daffodils from the hills. They also stacked the refrigerator with diet cola, cheese crackers, wafers and canned nuts, in case the First Lady feels peckish.

Despite the Clintons' much-publicised partiality for Indian food—stories of Chelsea dragging her parents to the New York restaurant, Bombay, sang over agency wires for days—Ms Clinton and daughter might not get to sample the authentic desi [indigenous] stuff. "They have just one meal that is not booked up and we are hopeful of enticing her to taste some of our food," says a senior hotel official.

Economist on Need To Assure Investors of Stability

BK2803084595 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 20 Mar 95 p 15

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bombay—The eminent economist, Mr Nani Palkhivala has said that NRIs [nonresident Indians] and foreigners need to be assured that the government policies regarding investments in infrastructure would remain stable.

He lauded the Finance Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh for amending Section 80 I(A) which allows private enterprise for the development of infrastructure like roads, ports and airports.

In this context, he related the instance of the Finance Act of 1986 which discontinued the investment allowance provided to those acquiring ships or aircraft without the mandatory three years' notice mentioned in the Act by just omitting the words in the statute.

While Indians have no option but the accept such things, the NRIs and foreigners have no such compulsions, he said.

As to how the Finance Minister can assure that a similar situation will not recur, he said the government should state its economic and fiscal policies for the whole term and it should apologise for past breaches.

"And I can think of no better person than Dr Singh to bring about a healthy tradition of giving assurance, amounting to "promisory estoppel" (which can be enforced in the High Court or the Supreme Court) to safeguard the investments of the individuals and foreigners.

He also pointed out three proposals which should not have been included as amendments in the Finance Bill as these changes cannot be brought about by the bureaucrats in the Finance Ministry.

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Regarding the amendment to Section 145 of the Income-Tax Act, which seeks to change the accountancy methods practiced in the country for over the past 100 years. "To ban the hybrid system (of cash or mercantile method), as practiced in the country today, is a violation of the fundamental right of an assessee," he said.

The second amendment to Section 145, which says that the accounting standards published as a notification in the official gazette will have to be followed, he said, "will make bureaucrats in charge of prescribing the accounting standards in the country."

Today, it is the Institute of Chartered Accountants which prescribes the norms to be followed in consideration with those practices in other parts of the world.

Also, the amendment in Section 194 J for tax deducted at source (TDS) for professionals in lieu of services, he said, "will lead to an increase in demand for payments in cash in order to avoid the bother of TDS."

He flayed the government for trying to make simple amendments as part of the Finance Bill regarding complex matters which have been going on for the past 30 years.

With regard to the Finance Minister's decision to consider the bonus shares' cost for computing capital gains as nil, he cited the Supreme Court judgement which states that the real cost cannot be considered as nil. The average cost of the old and new shares should be considered, he said.

He said there would be a chaotic situation by April 1, due to the new amendments as a number of assessments have been computed based on the old law and these would have to be reassessed now. "In cases where excess money is paid, would it be refunded? he queried.

He expressed surprise that nobody in the Finance Ministry had apprised Dr Singh about the fact that if the new depository legislation takes place, then (in the case of scripless trading) it would be difficult to know whether the transaction was for an old or new share.

He rued the fact that while the last four budgets had been presented by Dr Singh, the technocrat, the fifth budget was presented by Dr Singh, the politician.

The earlier four budgets had marked a turning point, he said, changing "an archaic economy into an athletic economy."

Focussing on the shortcomings in the budget, he said that the Finance Minister was expected to make a reference to the proposals in the earlier budgets like the surcharge on corporate tax and explain why he was unable to abolish the same. "But there was no mention of it."

With regard to the amendments in personal taxation, he said that inflation had rendered them wholly inadequate.

Guarantees To Attract Investment Suggested

BK2303140395 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 23 Mar 95

[Commentary by A.N. Prabhu]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Investment climate in India has been one of the most attractive ones in recent years. In fact, India has been only following what others have been doing for years by now. In the highly competitive world, several other countries have been rolling out red carpet for the investor not only at home but from abroad as well. The principle of self-reliance has great merit but beyond the point—the point between domestic savings and investment—there is a gap in resources. It has to be filled. Foreign investment thus fills the bill eminently. The country can afford to do so, because foreign investment has only started trickling in. An IMF study shows that developing countries increased foreign direct investment to $11.9 billion in 1993. India started from scratch and reached some $3 billion. It has miles to go. It needs funds in a number of priority sectors, such as infrastructure. The flow of foreign direct investment has already started. This should be accelerated.

India's policy changes envisage vast investment opportunities in power, telecommunications, ports, railways, and a host of other areas vital to the economy. Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, therefore, is on dot when he welcomes foreign investments in these sectors. His call for foreign investment in infrastructure sector at a conference of Euromoney in New Delhi yesterday has to be viewed in this background. Happily, there is a consensus on the economic reforms now. This meant delinking economic issues from other issues, taking a major chunk of time of policymakers. The first step toward making an investment-friendly atmosphere has already been taken, but the foreign investors expect something more than the general liberalized atmosphere for investment. It is felt that in spite of several steps by the government in making the investment atmosphere friendly, adequate guarantees have not been given for direct investment. Experts suggest that the finance minister should do more for a healthy tradition by giving assurance amounting to promissory (?stopper) which can be enforced in a high court or supreme court to safeguard the investments of foreigners. Government should also assure that the policies regarding investment in infrastructure would remain stable. It is heartening to note that the latest budget has made enough provisions for private investors for the development of infrastructure by amending Section 80-1A. With all such provisions in the latest budget, it is expected that the four-year-old exercise of the finance minister will turn the archaic economy into an athletic economy.

Rao Wants Asia To Face West's Protectionism

BK2703120695 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 27 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has said India can play a major role in the fast-growing Asian

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economy. Mr. Narasimha Rao has said the protectionist tendencies of the Western countries have made it imperative for the countries of the region to lay more emphasis on intra-regional trade.

He was inaugurating the 10th business opportunities conference of the International Chamber of Commerce [ICC] in New Delhi today. Outlining the achievements of India's economic liberalization program, Mr. Narasimha Rao said the sole aim is to achieve the sustainable growth rate with a human face. He invited foreign investments in the infrastructure sector, saying the country enjoys the advantage of skilled manpower.

Speaking on the occasion, the president of the ICC, Mr. (Rehny M. Cox), said the international community is watching with great interest the economic reforms initiated by the government. He said developing countries of the world are looking up to it as a role model.

Japanese Firm on 'Long Term View' of Investments

BK2903015695 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 21 Mar 95 p 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi—India is likely to become a manufacturing base for Japanese companies in the manufacturing sector, who are looking for bases outside Japan due to severe economic conditions in the country, Yoshihiko Miyauchi, President and CEO, Orix Corporation, Japan and Director, IL and FS [expansion unknown], said on Monday.

Addressing a luncheon meeting hosted in his honour by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) here, Mr Miyauchi said the GDP growth in Japan had slowed down considerably and the companies were depressed with low profitability due to the "double-burst" phenomenon, forcing them to shift manufacturing activities outside Japan and India was naturally an important consideration.

Agreeing to the point that Japanese investment in the Indian market was inadequate and extremely slow considering the potential, Mr Miyauchi said, it was true that the Japanese took a long time in taking investment decisions, but once they decide on it, there is an abundance.

Mr Miyauchi said the Japanese were taking a long term view on their investments in India and in the very near future, the Indian markets would see a lot of Japanese investment in important sectors.

Speaking about his company's involvement with the financial services sector in India, Mr Miyauchi said the intention was to further develop the finance and leasing sector in India.

He also informed the gathering that on his return to Japan, his endeavour would be to convince Japanese companies about India's capabilities and the strength of the economic reforms.

In his welcome address, the CII President, Subodh Bhargava said that in India's efforts in globalisation, Japan was seen as an important partner.

Stating that the response of the Japanese industry to the economic reforms had been below expectation, Mr Bhargava expressed hope that the interactions of the last few months would improve to situation.

An indication of this was the "partner state" of Japan at the 12th IETF [expansion unknown] in 1997, the CII President observed.

Editorial Notes Problems in Complying With WTO

BK2403051095 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 23 Mar 95 p 8

[Editorial: "Embarrassed Twice Over"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The embarrassment suffered by the Union Government in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday over the Patents (Amendment) Bill has been compounded by its failure to introduce the proposed legislation in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday [March 22]. On both occasions the ruling party has demonstrated poor parliamentary planning; more importantly, the rebuff it has suffered from the Opposition benches reflects an obvious absence of consensus on bringing the country's patents laws in consonance with the WTO [World Trade Organization] charter. That the Government was able to have the Bill passed in the Lower House neither lessens the embarrassment it has suffered on two consecutive days nor suggests a modicum of agreement beyond the Treasury benches on the proposed legislation. Indeed, even if it is able to introduce the Bill in the Rajya Sabha—and this is a big "if" given the fact that the odds are stacked in favour of the Opposition in the Upper House—it may not be able to muster enough votes to have it passed. Which means yet another slap in the face for the ruling party.

Yet, it need not have been so—the Government has had enough time to muster a consensus of sorts on the need to amend the existing patent laws—something which will have to be done sooner or later unless India wants to pull out of the WTO. But rather than discuss the issue threadbare with the Opposition parties and convince them of the inevitability of the move, the Government has fought shy of talking about it, instead opting for surreptitious legislation without taking into account the arithmetic of voting in Parliament. As much was proved on Tuesday when the Opposition moved a resolution to stall the Bill in the Lok Sabha and there were not enough ruling party MPs to vote against it. Similarly, the Government's attempt to introduce the Bill in the Rajya Sabha without listing it on the day's agenda came a cropper.

Apart from the fact that this shows the cavalier attitude of the ruling party, it also raises a question mark over the Government's open commitment towards changing the

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patents laws. True, in the past, too, there have been occasions when the ruling party has been embarrassed by the absence of an adequate number of MPs on the Treasury benches, but in this case the message that has been sent out damages not only the image of the Congress but also has the potential to raise questions at the WTO about the Government's ability to get parliamentary ratification for multilateral trade laws that have been already agreed upon. As for the Opposition, if it is able to defeat the Bill in the Rajya Sabha, it can claim a victory of sorts in its battle against the WTO charter. This cannot but put the Government on the defensive, something which it can ill afford. Moreover, if the Bill cannot be enacted in this session, it will mean issuing a fresh Ordinance to replace the one that will expire by end-June. Either way, it is a Hobson's choice for the Government which has manoeuvred itself into an unenviable situation of its own making.

Parliament Deadlocked Over Bihar Issue

BK2903131995 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Proceedings in both the houses of Parliament were stalled for the second day today over the Bihar issue. The Lok Sabha was adjourned thrice and the Rajya Sabha twice before the final adjournments following noisy protests by the National Front and left party members against the imposition of president's rule in the state. Amidst the din, the ministers could only lay papers listed against them. [sentence as heard] The government's statement on imposition of president's rule in Bihar was also laid as read because of continued slogan shouting by agitated members.

The trouble broke out in both houses in the morning itself with the Janata Dal and left party members terming the action as undemocratic. They alleged that whatever has happened in Bihar was at the instance of the center. They did not agree with the contention that there is a constitutional crisis.

The government today informed the Lok Sabha that president's rule has been imposed in Bihar only to ensure conformity with the spirit of the Constitution and to make due financial arrangements for the period after the 31st of this month. In a statement tabled in the house, the minister of state for home, Mr. P.M. Syed, assured the members that the government is committed to upholding democratic traditions and the Constitution at all costs. The minister said the Bihar governor in his report to the president had stated that in view of further rescheduling of assembly elections, it does not seem possible to constitute an elected government in the state by the end of this month so as to secure passage of vote on account for the next financial year. He also expressed the view that the situation had arisen wherein the state government cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. The only alternative, the governor said, was to impose president's rule by invoking Article 356 of the Constitution.

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] says the Janata Dal and left parties are responsible for what it called virtually holding Parliament to ransom. Referring to the repeated adjournments of both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the party leader, Mr. Jaswant Singh, told newsmen the present situation is a result of mishandling of the situation by the government.

Iran

Turkish Operation, Crisis in Northern Iraq Viewed

NC2903174295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 28 Mar 95

[Unattributed commentary: "The Crisis in Northern Iraq Is Intensifying"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Seven days have passed since Turkey's incursion into northern Iraq. It has been observed that the international pressure on Turkey to force that country to withdraw its troops has intensified. Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said on 27 March that Iraq's territorial integrity must be safeguarded and that the Turkish military forces' presence in northern Iraq will complicate the problems in the region. So, he said, the Turkish troops must immediately be withdrawn.

Meanwhile, it has been reported that clashes are taking place between the Turkish military forces and the Kurdish guerrillas close to the common border between Iraq and Syria. Several sources have not confirmed the reports that the Turkish military units have been successful. Political observers are convinced that the Turkish troops have not achieved their goals.

Meanwhile, it has been reported that the clashes between the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq have flared up again after a lull of nearly 30 days. The news agencies have reported that the fighting between the Democratic Party of Kurdistan and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan intensified yesterday. Irbil is regarded as Kurdistan's capital. So, the two groups believe that the control of Irbil is important. In view of that, the clashes are gradually intensifying in that area. The city has been under the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan's control during the past three months. The people in Iraqi Kurdistan have suffered from the UN sanctions on Iraq. They have also suffered from the Ba'thist regime's embargo and the clashes between the Kurdish groups. Turkey's incursion into northern Iraq has worsened the situation of the Kurdish people. The Turkish military operation and the clashes between the Kurdish groups must end in order that incidents can be obstructed in the region.

Turkish Military Operations Assailed

NC3003070895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 30 Mar 95

[From the "News Reports" section]

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[FBIS Translated Text] Our political report this week is devoted to Turkey's military operations inside Iraqi territory. Our political correspondent contacted the Turkish Embassy in Tehran for information on Ankara's objective behind this act and asked to interview the Turkish charge d'affaires. The charge refused to be interviewed in relation with this. A written report on Turkey's military operations in northern Iraq has been prepared and I invite you to listen to it.

Late last week the Turkish Army started extensive military operations inside Iraqi territory. The Turkish Government has said that the objective behind these operations was to crush rebel guerrillas who are apparently based in northern Iraq and in Iraqi Kurdistan.

For years Turkey has been involved in a war with rebel guerrillas in the east and, during the past two years, Turkish soldiers have entered Iraqi territory in a bid to crush these guerrillas. But the recent operations by the Turkish Army inside Iraqi territory are different from earlier operations, since more men are deployed and the area covered is more extensive. Western news agencies report that Turkey has dispatched over 30,000 soldiers with various advanced weapons between 25 to 65 km inside Iraqi territory.

The Turkish Government's true objectives behind this operation are not clear. But recent comments by officials in Ankara have caused concern. The Turkish president recently said the Turkish servicemen may remain long in Iraq and a Turkish Army general pointed out several days ago that the Turkish forces should remain inside Iraqi territory.

No pretext can justify Turkey's recent military operations, which have violated Iraq's territorial integrity, since Turkey—as a country neighboring Iraq—has always emphasized Iraq's territorial integrity. What will help preserve stability and tranquility in the region is respect for the territorial integrity of regional countries. Although some countries may not have much political and domestic stability, this cannot be a reason to violate their territorial integrity.

Turks May 'Escalate' Kurdish Problem

LD2903213795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1930 GMT 29 Mar 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The presence of the Turkish troops in Iraqi soil and their assaults against the Kurdish rebels opposed to Ankara government continue to be among the most important news reports attracting the attention of certain political and news circles in the world. [passage omitted]

It appears that the Ankara government, by creating a neutral zone and through the long-drawn presence of its Army in north Iraq, is seeking to overcome the problems resulting from the infiltration and attacks of the Kurdish rebels from north Iraq into its territory.

In the opinion of many political experts, there is no doubt that implementation of this plan necessitates political stability and economic viability in Turkey in order to counter foreign protest and reactions.

Some political experts do not consider the recent comments of Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller on the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Iraq in the near future as unrelated to such observations. But, seemingly, it is essential for Ms. Ciller to reach a common viewpoint with the country's military authorities in view of their thorough influence in the national policy that has constantly believed in going for the military option in order to resolve the Kurdish problem.

In the opinion of political analysts, this matter is somewhat difficult, at least under the present circumstances, when military men and many Turkish officials are seeking to finally crush the Turkish Kurds. There is, however, no doubt that continued presence of the Turkish troops in north Iraq is not only considered as an open aggression against the soil of an independent state and the violation of international law, but adoption of a military option, as shown by experience, lacks the necessary effectiveness required for the ultimate resolution of the problem of Turkey's rebel Kurds. Continuation of such tactics by Ankara can lead to a tense and unstable situation in the region and even escalate it.

Radio Applauds Gaza Suicide Operation

NC3003072395 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 30 Mar 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The martyrdom operation by a Palestinian combatant in Gaza yesterday, which killed two and wounded two Zionist soldiers, again proved that the current political solutions to end the Palestinian crisis are not very popular among the oppressed people of Palestine. Efforts by Tel Aviv and Washington to solve the Palestinian crisis and to crush the intifadah through cooperation with 'Arafat have yielded no results in the past year and have failed to stop the anti-Zionist operations in the occupied territories.

Political circles believe the continuation of the intifadah and the intensification of the Palestinian people's struggles following the Oslo pact between 'Arafat and the Zionist regime prove that, unlike the PLO leaders, the Palestinian people do not consider compromise with the usurping and aggressive Zionist regime to be acceptable and do not have great hopes that these steps will ensure the Palestinian nation's minimum legitimate rights. Thus they continue their struggle against the regime occupying Jerusalem.

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This outlook, the outlook of many of the Palestinian people, stems from there having been no change in the expansionist and aggressive behavior of the Zionist regime following the Oslo compromise. Since the compromise between 'Arafat and the usurping regime, this regime has continued to suppress the Palestinian people and continued its expansionist policies of building settlements and housing Zionist emigrants in them. It is also resorting to new sly policies in a bid to starve the Palestinian people and crush their resistance. This illegitimate regime, which has destroyed every infrastructure of the Palestinian people's economy on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during the past two decades on the basis of a calculated plan to use hundreds of thousands of Palestinians as cheap labor, has resorted to every pretext during the past few months to close off the so-called self-rule areas of Palestine, thus rendering many Palestinians jobless and also barring the already low exports from these areas, paralyzing the Palestinian's economic life.

U.S. 'Provocative Claims' Viewed

NC2903185695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 28 Mar 95

[Unattributed commentary: "The New U.S. Provocative Claims Against Iran"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its latest edition, the WASHINGTON TIMES described the claims made by several U.S. military officials, including the U.S. secretary of defense, as confusing statements. It said that the Clinton administration's claims and unfounded reports are aimed at convincing the world that a state of confusion exists in Iran.

The U.S. officials have outlined their uneasiness about the Persian Gulf in various ways during the past few weeks. The United States is convinced that Iran's move to take defensive measures poses a threat not only to its allies but also to the U.S. interests in the Strait of Hormuz. It is common knowledge that the United States has always wished to have a security crisis in the Persian Gulf. It is also common knowledge that that country has displayed its hostile policy against Iran in various ways in the past. In fact, the WASHINGTON TIMES has quoted several U.S. diplomats as saying that the United States cannot agree to the establishment of peace and stability in the Persian Gulf. That is interesting. According to those diplomats and several political observers, the United States exaggerates the threat in the Persian Gulf in order to effectively safeguard its interests. In fact, several U.S. military circles have said that they maintain a skeptical approach on the U.S. secretary of defense's disclosures and admitted that Iran's measures to defend itself in the Persian Gulf are no different from those each and every country takes for the same purpose. The same sources also said that the United States will regret making such claims if they are found to be unfounded.

In addition to the U.S. newspapers, many of the media organs in the Western countries also have criticized the U.S. claims against Iran, saying that they are not serious and are unfounded accusations which indicate the lack of coordination within the U.S. Administration.

Commentary Views 'Mounting' U.S. Propaganda

LD2903142995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 29 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At a time when the Pentagon and the White House through publication of exaggerating statistics and figures concerning the reinforcement of the Iranian forces in the Persian Gulf, are attempting to inculcate their illusory and ambiguous claims against Iran in the public opinion, some Western based publications and diplomatic bodies assess the repetition of such claims as a premeditated scheme aimed at mounting a political-psychological campaign against Iran.

In this relation, the German based publication, DER SPIEGEL has described the goal behind the latest claims of the U.S. Secretary of State William Perry, based on the deployment of chemical weapons and surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles on the Sirri and Abu Musa Island by the Islamic Republic of Iran [IRI], to be aimed at creating intimidation and terror among the foreign investors who are willing to have economic exchanges with Iran.

According to the informed circles with regard to the White House's attempts in setting up barrier and obstacles in the way of trade exchanges with or foreign economic investments in Iran, this measure needs to be pondered and surveyed. But besides these measures, which pursue nothing but to deal a blow to or bring pressure on economic against the IRI, the White House follows some other major goals in mounting propaganda campaign against Iran. [sentence as heard]

In the wake of the oil war in the Persian Gulf, which led to the liberation of Kuwait and massive American build up in the Persian Gulf, in order to legitimize its presence in the Persian Gulf and to stem the growth and intensification of anti-American sentiments in the general opinion in the region, America has attempted to pick necessary excuses to justify its presence in the region.

However, publication of certain statistics on the U.S. arms deals with some regional states further reveal other aspects and angles in the White House's propaganda campaign against the IRI in the Persian Gulf. Some statistics are typical of the fact that under the status quo America is involved in 75 percent of the world overall arms transactions. Meanwhile since the outbreak of the oil war in the Persian Gulf this country has so far sold roughly 45 billion marks worth of military hardware to Saudi Arabia and the volume of military agreements and arms deals between America and the PGCC [Persian Gulf Cooperation Council; GCC] member states typifies

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that something between 60 to 80 billion dollars worth of weaponry would be sold to these countries within the next five years.

However, once again one can clearly understand various goals and aspects under line American's illusory and ambiguous claims which are periodically repeated against the IRI.

Radio Reports on Velayati's PRC Visit

LD2903134695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in continuation of his visit to China, arrived in the port city of Shanghai Tuesday March 28.

In the course of his China visit, Dr. Velayati has held important talks on bilateral relations and regional issues, including the situation in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, Iraq, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, in meetings with a number of top Chinese officials. In these meetings, Dr. Velayati, referring to the existence of numerous grounds and also potential for economic and commercial cooperation between these two states, described the progress of Tehran-Beijing relations as good and encouraging. In this respect, Dr. Velayati viewed the earlier agreements on cooperation and the implementation of accords, including those related to minerals, cement, petrochemicals, and oil, as a sign of progress in the expansion of bilateral cooperation in recent years.

It is to be noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran and China, despite having different cultures and political systems, but due to possessing a strategic position in Asia, have numerous common traits in many spheres. The exchange of visits by the top officials of Iran and China, especially in recent years, after the victory of the Islamic revolution, has expanded Tehran-Beijing ties. Among other main factors which have strengthened Iran-China relations over recent years, one can mention close posturings and cooperation between the two countries in international organizations. The two countries' efforts in boosting coordination on main issues faced by the third world is considered an important step in this direction.

In the opinion of political and economic experts, Iran and China, as two important countries in the Persian Gulf and East Asia, can meet one another's needs in many fields through deepening their political and economic ties. Also, by benefiting from their resources and potential, they can move towards boosting their relations (?to be rated) as a suitable model in the entire Asia. [Words indistinct] traditional friendship between the nation of Iran and China and also the exchange of top delegations can prove very effective in this regard.

The current visit of Dr. Velayati to China, too, acts as a major stride in boosting this cooperation.

Rafsanjani Chairs First Cabinet Meeting

LD2903220695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The first cabinet meeting in 1374 [year beginning 21 March 1995] was chaired by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani on Wednesday [29 March] afternoon. The president, referring to the guidelines of the exalted leader [Ayatollah Khamene'i] in his New Year's message, drew the cabinet's attention to points emphasized in various parts of his message and said: In the management of state affairs in the current year, officials must adopt measures so that efforts to strengthen the work ethic and social discipline among the people, officials, and employers continue, and economic and financial discipline are also established. He stressed the need for further observing economic and financial discipline in public establishments and said: Bearing in mind the country's resources, priorities must be observed and expenditures must be according to incomes and programs that have been planned on the basis of priorities.

The president emphasized the exalted leader's guidelines on economic and financial discipline and avoidance of tasks of secondary importance. He added: While there are tasks of primary importance to be undertaken, serious action must be taken in all public and private sectors, and authorities must supervise those affairs and regularly submit reports on what has been done.

In the course of the meeting, after a discussion of domestic and foreign events, the cabinet was briefed about the New Year's holidays, city and road safety during the holidays, and increased travel and vacations.

During the session, the minister of mines and metals offered comparative figures for metal production during 1372 and 1373 [years beginning 21 March 1993 and 1994], as follows:

Copper output in 1372 totaled 74,000 tonnes. It increased to 100,000 tonnes, a rise of 34 percent in 1373.

Aluminum production in 1372 totaled 90,000 tonnes. It rose 29 percent in 1373, reaching 116,000 tonnes.

Steel output in 1372 totaled 3.9 million. In 1373 it increased by more than 20 percent to 4.7 million.

During the meeting, regulations on the enforcement of the ban on satellite reception equipment—depicted in Article 11 of the law on banning satellite reception equipment—was discussed and approved.

Nepal

Leftist Party To Protest During Clinton Visit

BK2903154995 Hong Kong AFP in English 1536 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, March 29 (AFP)—Nepal's extreme left United People's Front Party (UPF)

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will greet US First Lady Hillary Clinton with a black flag demonstration when she arrives on a three-day visit, a party source said Wednesday [29 March].

Speaking two days ahead of Clinton's scheduled arrival here, the UPF said it would protest her visit and demonstrate against what it called US interference in Peru and the detention of the leader of the Maoist Shining Path guerrilla movement.

"We demand that the US stop its repressive action against the Peruvian revolutionary people and release (the Shining Path leader) without delay," a UPF member said.

The UPF's plans were met with opposition from Nepal's minority communist government with Nepal Communist League President Shambhuram Shrestha saying: "Hillary Clinton's visit to Kathmandu is a part of the diplomatic interaction between the US and Nepal. The UPF should not do such things."

Clinton is scheduled to arrive in the Himalayan kingdom on Friday from India as part of her 12-day tour of South Asia.

The US first lady, who is accompanied by her daughter Chelsea and a 15-member delegation, was scheduled to arrive here March 30 from the Indian city of Agra but had delayed the time for unknown reasons, western diplomatic sources said.

During her stay in this Himalayan kingdom, she is to have tea with Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari and then have an audience with King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya at the royal palace, a palace source said.

The US first lady is scheduled to visit the Royal Chitaun National Park, 110 kilometres (68 miles) south of here, on April 1 and spend a night at the Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge.

Wildlife conservation was expected to be discussed during her meetings with officials, a source close to the premier said.

Clinton and her entourage will leave here April 2 and travel on to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Prohibition of 'Anti-India Activity' Reiterated

BK3003005395 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1000 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu has reiterated that no anti-India activity will be allowed on Nepalese soil. Reacting to a news report in a section of the press in New Delhi and Kathmandu about Kahsmiri militants' move to hold a conference in Nepal, the Home Ministry spokesman said no such activity will be permitted which may harm the interests of a friendly neighbor.

Indian Envoy Welcomes Ban on Kashmir Conference

BK3003023195 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has welcomed the prompt action taken by Nepal in disallowing a proposed conference on Kashmir in Kathmandu next month. In a statement, the Indian ambassador to Nepal, Mr. K.V. Rajan, said the objectives of the meeting are hostile to India, aimed at interfering in its internal affairs and creating difficulties in the revival of the democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir. AIR Kathmandu correspondent says Mr. Rajan has been in touch with the Nepalese leaders over the issue and met the foreign secretary, Mr. Kedar Bakth Shreshta, in Kathmandu this morning. Mr. Shreshtha reiterated that the Nepalese soil will not be allowed to be used for any activity that may harm the interest of India.

Pakistan

President Attends Briefing on Karachi Situation

BK2903151495 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has directed the Sindh Administration to restore confidence of the people by quick processing of criminal cases through courts. He said the people should also know the ultimate fate of the terrorists and criminals arrested by the law enforcing agencies. It is only in this way that the confidence of the people in the law and order machinery can be restored. He was speaking at a briefing given about the law and order situation in Karachi.

The Sindh chief minister, Syed Abdullah Shah, apprised the president about measures to restore normalcy in the city. He especially referred to beefing up of the police force, provision of modern equipment and vehicles to bring more mobility to law enforcing agencies. The chief minister said that some notorious gangs and terrorists have been apprehended in the last few days. Some of them were involved in sectarian violence.

The naib amir [deputy chief] of Jamaat-i-Islami, Professor Ghafoor Ahmad, and a delegation of Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan comprising Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani and Prof. Shah Faridul Haq also met the president. The president appealed to them to help the government in controlling terrorism and violence. He said some groups from outside Karachi wanted to take advantage of the situation and promote sectarian feelings. Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari appreciated the formation of National Solidarity Council headed by Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani at a convention of ulema [religious scholars] held in Islamabad. He said such efforts should continue. The Jamaat-i-Islami and Jamita-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan leaders extended cooperation for creating harmony among the people.

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The Sindh Assembly was told in Karachi today that the government sincerely wanted to resolve the Karachi problem. Provincial ministers Mr. Zafar Leghari and Mr. Nisar Khoro expressed sympathies with the people of Karachi and asked the opposition to cooperate in tackling the law and order situation in the provincial capital. Later, the opposition leader, Dr. Farooq Sattar, told newsmen that MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] would end its boycott of the house proceedings tomorrow.

Ninety-eight people have been arrested in Karachi on various criminal charges. Arms including a Kalashnikov, six rifles, seven pistols, narcotics, and other stolen goods have also been recovered.

Islamic Leader Accuses Rival Group

BK3003115395 Islamabad KHABRAIN in Urdu 30 Mar 95 pp 8, 4

[Report by NEWS NETWORK INTERNATIONAL]

[FBIS Translated Text] Islamabad—Allama Murid Abbas Yazdani, chief of the Sipah-i-Mohammad, has said that Yusuf Ramzi was a full-fledged member of the Sipah-i-Sahaba and the central figure of contacts between the Saudi Government and the Sipah-i-Sahaba. After Ramzi's arrest it has been exposed that the Saudi Government and Iraq are also totally involved in sectarian terrorism. He said that the murder of two U.S. diplomats in Karachi was engineered by Sipah-i-Sahaba. Addressing the first news conference after his release [as published; place and reason for detention not specified] on 29 March, Yazdani said that the summit meeting of religious parties to eliminate sectarianism was a futile exercise and was organized only to save those who blasphemed the prophet from being punished. Allama Murid Abbas Yazdani said: We have boldly faced the court cases. If our opponents have the moral courage, then they, too, should face the cases against them. Why should they hide themselves?

Leghari Urges Talks With MQM

BK2903100495 Islamabad THE NATION in English 29 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Lahore—President Sardar Farooq Ahmad Leghari has urged the government to hold talks with the political forces including MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] to find out a permanent solution to Karachi crisis.

He observed this while talking to newsmen at the 63rd convocation of Kinnaird College here at Alhamra Hall on Tuesday. Punjab Governor Chaudhury Altaf Hussain, Chief Minister, Manzoor Watto and Provincial Minister for Education, Riaz Fatiana were also present on the occasion.

The President differed with Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar's recent views about arresting Altaf Hussain saying 'the government should hold talks with all the political people and parties including MQM to settle Karachi issue.

The President's attention was drawn to the recent statement of Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar in which he had said that the government will not spare Altaf Hussain and his partymen and it needs not hold talks with terrorists.

When asked about Opposition Leader Nawaz Sharif's demand of general amnesty for MQM Chief Altaf Hussain and his other partymen for peace in Karachi, the President said that people often demand many things. Karachi problem is a complex one, its all aspects should be considered thoroughly as there is no immediate solution to the problem.

He said the issue must be studied in a wide spectrum, suggesting peoples grievances should be removed, an economic package should be given, crime and criminality, heinous crimes and terrorism, ethnic and sectarian violence should be crushed, administrative flaws and weaknesses should be removed, foreign hand should be checked and all the political parties including MQM and the people should be taken into confidence for a permanent solution to crisis.

He called upon the people to take this issue seriously and asserted that it needs a sustained political solution and for this purpose, doors for political dialogue should remain open. Commenting on foreign hand behind the situation, he said those should be checked who are fishing in our waters. He said to check the foreign hand, people should be taken in confidence and their deprivations be removed. However, he emphasised that the criminals, terrorists, those involved in violence and outlaws must be dealt with an iron hand. He expressed the hope that Karachi will return to normalcy very soon.

When asked that PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz group] led Opposition has demanded change in the system and asked for Presidential system, the President opposed the idea and said the people of Pakistan has chosen Parliamentary democratic system in the country while passing the 1973 Constitution unanimously. 'There is still consensus on this Constitution and there is no need to change the system', said the President. [passage omitted]

Minister Sees 'Positive Change' in U.S. Policy

BK2903160995 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, has said there is a positive change in the U.S. policy toward Pakistan due to the policies of the present government over the last one and half years. Talking to newsmen in Islamabad, he hoped that Pakistan-U.S. relations will be further strengthened with the forthcoming visit of the prime minister to the United States. Ms. Benazir Bhutto will have several meetings with Congressional committees to put across Pakistan's

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point of view on several issues. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said many congressmen now openly support Pakistan on vital issues, including amendment in the Pressler law. He referred to the American defense secretary, Mr. William Perry, who also recognizes that the Pressler Amendment has been counterproductive.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1338 GMT on 29 March in a similar report adds: "The problems blocking supply of F-16 fighters to Pakistan are unlikely to be solved during Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's coming visit to Washington, her foreign minister indicated Wednesday. Asif Ahmad Ali, quoted by the official Associated Press of Pakistan, said he did not expect any 'dramatic outcome' on the F-16 issue during Bhutto's visit scheduled to start on April 5."

[AFP adds: "Ali said Pakistan had taken a political decision not to compromise on its nuclear programme which he described as 'peaceful.'"]

'Strategy' for Bhutto's U.S. Visit Outlined

BK2903124995 Islamabad PAKISTAN in Urdu 29 Mar 95 p 4

[Editorial: "Strategy for the Prime Minister's Visit to the United States"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The strategy for the prime minister's visit to the United States was formulated at a meeting between President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and Chief of Army Staff General Abdul Waheed at the President House. They discussed in detail the visit by U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton to Pakistan; the prime minister's talks with her; and the situation in Karachi. According to reliable sources, they reviewed the issues Pakistan wanted to raise with the United States in the context of the prime minister's visit, the U.S. efforts for peace in South Asia, and the discriminatory treatment meted out to Pakistan. They decided that Pakistan, at all costs, will not give up its nuclear program and will not sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]; and the United States will be asked to put forward new proposals to prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms and to revoke the unilateral application of the Pressler Amendment on Pakistan. They also took important decisions for the restoration of law and order situation in Karachi. These decisions will be announced before the prime minister's visit to the United States. From the very beginning, Pakistan's stance has been to use its nuclear program for peaceful purposes only. Despite having the capability to manufacture nuclear weapons, Pakistan will not produce them. Pakistan is in favor of controlling the proliferation of nuclear arms and is also prepared to sign the NPT for this purpose, provided India signs it first. Time has proved that through the Pressler Amendment, the United States has not succeeded in realizing the real objective of enforcing disarmament. On the contrary, this amendment has proved an improper experiment on Pakistan. Economic and defense aid to Pakistan continues to be withheld, thus creating various problems. To a certain extent, it is encouraging to note that the United States itself has started realizing the ineffectiveness of the Pressler Amendment and has also started acknowledging the realistic stance of Pakistan. Therefore, it can be expected that during Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's visit, matters concerning bilateral relations will be dealt with and that the relations of trust will be restored and strengthened between the two old allies.

Possible Demonstrations Viewed

BK2903132195 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN OBSERVER in English 29 Mar 95 p 6

[Editorial: "A matter of patriotism and good manners"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The forthcoming visit of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to the United States has generated a lot of heat in the Pakistani Community living in America. The news is coming fast and furious that a number of groups including PML (N) [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Group] sympathisers and the estranged PPP [Pakistan People's Party] workers are planning to hold public demonstrations during the Prime Minister's stay in the US. There are other groups, factions and lobbies of expatriate Pakistanis who want to exploit this visit to advance their interests. Quite clearly, the situation in this respect has become so tense that the Prime Minister [PM] Benazir had to send top-level emissaries to US to dissuade the Pak community from staging their protest. On the face of it, the PM envoys do not seem to be making much headway, and in all probability, some unlovely scene may be witnessed during the Premier's visit. While intended demonstrations are not likely to change Islamabad's policies, they will certainly tarnish the image of Pakistan among the citizens of the United States. When the Prime Minister travels abroad, it is as the flag carrier of the country, and must be given all the respect and consideration which a patriot gives to national emblems. No one who sincerely loves his land and his people would like his country to become a laughing stock on foreign soil.

Demonstrations on issues that are purely of domestic nature and must be resolved within the country would do nothing but evoke ridicule, contempt, and derision among foreign audience. Pakistanis living abroad, for whatever reason, must remember that the world at large does not view them as Leagures, PPP jialas, Shias, Sunnies or Mohajirs. They all are regarded as Pakistanis by the citizens of the host country. In the situation, both moral and practical considerations demand that they should consider themselves as the ambassadors of their country. Their good and bad deeds will generate praise or censure for their country not just for themselves. People of the host country neither know nor care what political, religious affiliation expatriate Pakistanis have; they are all members of a nation. Their action will determine what kind of impressions the outsiders have about Pakistan.

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An expatriate community by its very nature is in an alien environment. they face formidable challenges, forces and handicaps in the land of their, migration. Domestic divisions become totally irrelevant in the new country. They need to act with exceptional unity to receive respect in the adopted society. They are in an extremely vulnerable position. If they carry their differences overseas, they weaken the position of the entire community. If the members of Pakistani community feel so strongly about domestic issues, they should return to their homeland and fight for these causes. If is the height of foolishness to be drawn in battle array in front of the whole world which is quite indifferent to our mutual and often irrational antagonism. They find our clashes infantile, pathetic and unnecessary. If the PPP workers have grievances against their leadership, or PML (N) have complaints against the governing party, the most effective way to combat perceived wrongs is to use the avenues of protest available inside the country not impose their noisy presence on the host community.

Urged To Pursue Nuclear Issue

BK2903120195 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 29 Mar 95 pp 1, 11

[Article by Anwer Khalil: "Don't leave out the nuclear option"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime minister Benazir Bhutto is scheduled to leave on April 5 next on a working official visit of the United States. During her stay there, she will meet representatives of the US government as well as from the Congress. A luncheon meeting with President Bill Clinton on April 11 will be the high mark of her official business in Washington.

Pakistan's nuclear programme must be major subject to come up for discussion and which would be of prime importance from the point of view of Pakistan. There exists a national consensus on the subject among all shades of Pakistani public opinion. A vote by the National Assembly reposing confidence in the government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and reiterating in candid terms a consensus on this most important subject would have been ideal. A joint Parliamentary resolution expressing national unanimity on the question of Pakistan's nuclear programme would also have served well and proved helpful in talks with the US leaders. Instead, the mechanism of getting a joint statement signed through contacts with individuals political parties at various places and various times was adopted and that too only on Kashmir.

Given the highly charged political atmosphere maybe that was the only and perhaps the most practical way to get an expression of national consensus signed. But why confine the consensus to Kashmir only? No doubt that US support would be of paramount importance for resolving this outstanding dispute with India. But the most important problem between the US and Pakistan which continues to vitiate bilateral relations is not Kashmir. It is the US insistence on discriminating against Pakistan because of its modest nuclear research programme which continues to mar progress in promoting bilateral relations between the two countries.

Because of a most discriminatory, country-specific US Law, the infamous Pressler Amendment, Pakistan continues to suffer enormously, both in terms of economic and social development as well as in terms of defence capability.

Since 1990, when the Pressler was applied to Pakistan, a total ban on economic development assistance continues and in the field of defence, the supply relationship which existed between the two countries remains cut off.

Pakistan's defence capability has suffered the most because for much of its defence equipment and spare parts, Pakistan depends on the US. The United States was Pakistan's single largest source of defence purchases. Most of the weapons systems used by our armed forces were of US origin. Not only for modernisation but even for maintaining the capability of our defence forces, we depended on the US. A total cut-off of supplies was thus most damaging for Pakistan. To make the ban severely punishing, it was applied even on spares and components we purchased from the open market. To further tighten the squeeze, the parts which were sent to the United States for repair as per the contractual agreements with the US manufacturers were confiscated and not returned. The consumables which the manufacturers contracts to keep supplying, for instance in the case of F-16s already supplied, were banned as coming under the mischief of Pressler. For all this, Pakistan had made payments from its own resources and most of it came under commercial sales but in their anxiety to punish Pakistan, the US leaders did everything to break Pakistan's resolve to keep their nuclear option open.

Now that we have been able to withstand the unjust pressures from the US and its allies, now that we have survived the worst kind of discriminatory sanctions, now that we have learnt to effect economic development without USAID, shall we relent on retaining our independence to run our nuclear programme according to our own national interest?

As President Farooq Leghari said the other day, there exists a national consensus on retaining the nuclear programme. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is expected to emphasise in her talks with US leaders this national consensus, underline the unfair treatment Pakistan is getting from the US, and inform them that the Pakistani nation expects its traditional ally to lift the discriminatory sanctions under the infamous Pressler law. A joint statement signed by all parties clearly expressing its freedom in adopting the best measures for national security will definitely increase the weight of the arguments she will hopefully be making on the subject.

A joint Declaration expressing national consensus on retaining the nuclear option will strengthen the hands of

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the Prime Minister in the same way as the declaration on Kashmir. Nawabzada Narrullah Khan has already established credentials for accomplishing such tasks in a short time.

Combined with the Kashmir Declaration, the Declaration on nuclear programme will symbolise most powerful support for the Prime Minister and help her in arguing on the thorny questions related to the Pressler sanctions and eliminating the consequences of such sanctions. That and not the amount of money promised by US investors would constitute success of her trip to the US.

Warned Against 'Compromise'

BK3003024595 Islamabad KHABRAIN in Urdu 29 Mar 95 p 10

[Editorial: "The Prime Minister's Visit to the United States; Assurances, All Right, But...."]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting of the "troika" at the president house on Monday [27 March], it was decided to make it clear to the United States that Pakistan will not abandon its policies on Kashmir and the nuclear program. The meeting—attended by President Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Army Chief General Abdul Waheed Khan—also decided that Pakistan will not sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty so long as India does not sign it. The prime minister will request the United States either to deliver the F-16 planes to Pakistan or return the money that Islamabad had paid against the cost of the aircraft. The prime minister assured the meeting that she will neither deviate from Pakistan's principled stand on vital national issues nor enter into any bargaining on these matters.

The decisions made at the meeting of the "troika" in the context of the prime minister's upcoming visit to the United States and the prime minister's assurances are heartening. This is so because Washington wants Islamabad to give certain assurances about its nuclear program, which are prejudicial to Pakistan's national interests. In fact, the silent diplomacy between Pakistan and the United States was started mainly to obtain assurances that are aimed at forcing Pakistan to ultimately "roll back" its nuclear program. Similarly, Washington is also trying to make Pakistan "relax" its stand on Kashmir and also stop its current diplomatic, political, and moral support to the Kashmiri people. The United States also wants to have the ardent followers of Islam—reviled by the West as "fundamentalists"—suppressed and a liberal society created in Pakistan.

The prime minister's assurances about not deviating from the principled stand on Kashmir are acceptable, but the series of raids on the offices of the organizations connected with the struggle for the freedom of Kashmir and the arrests made there during the past two-three days betray the prime minister's real "intentions." The action against organizations working for the Kashmir cause can please only India and the United States. We do not want to accuse the prime minister of marching on the path that leads to the fulfillment of the Indian designs, but whatever has happened has created serious indignation and unease among the patriotic political circles. Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, the chairman of the Kashmir committee, has expressed his displeasure over the government's action and urged the president to take note of the matter.

We consider it our duty to warn that, notwithstanding their tall claims, if the government displays any flexibility, hesitation, or compromise in the context of our national interests during the prime minister's visit to the United States, then the nation will not forgive this government. The government should understand that the days of entering into any kind of "secret understanding" on national interests are now over. The government will reap only what it sows. However, if the prime minister fully exhibits a spirit of patriotism during her visit to the United States, then the doubts arising in the minds of the people will be removed.

British Investment Mission Discusses Opportunities

BK2903141595 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 28 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] British investors have expressed satisfaction with the investment climate in Pakistan and plan to invest $1.1 billion in fiber, petrochemical, communications, and energy related fields. (Sidney Lithworth), the leader of the visiting British investment mission, speaking at a seminar on the private power sector in Lahore this evening, said the British private sector has been exploring avenues of cooperation and joint ventures in traditional as well as nontraditional areas in Pakistan. (Lithworth) said the Pakistani Government's economic policies have attracted foreign investment and British investors consider Pakistan an ideal place for investment. He said British investors are especially interested in hydroelectric power projects.

Earlier, they were briefed by the Water and Power Development Authority chairman on plans and projects in the power sector for the socioeconomic development of the country.

The select group of British investors on this mission also offered investment in oil and gas exploration and production in Pakistan. The offer was made by the members of the mission when they called on Anwar Saifullah Khan, federal petroleum and natural resources minister, in Islamabad today. The mission members were briefed on the facilities available in the oil and gas sectors. They were informed that areas in Balochistan have been opened for oil and gas exploration and development. The federal minister told them the Pakistani Government is also trying to make offshore oil exploration more attractive.

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$1.1 Billion Investment Planned

BK2903085195 Islamabad THE NATION in English 29 Mar 95 p 10

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore—Leader of the visiting UK delegation and Deputy Chairman National Westminster Bank Plc Sydney Lipworth has said that British investors considers Pakistan as an ideal place for investment amongst other South Asian countries. He said that Pakistan would be one of the most important markets of the world in coming years.

He was addressing a private power sector seminar at a local hotel on Tuesday. The seminar was hosted by the private Power & Infrastructure Board of the Government of Pakistan, Chairman WAPDA [Water and Power Development Authority] Shamsul Mulk attended the seminar as co-chairman along with Sydney Lipworth, Chairman and M. D. Karachi Electricity & Suppliers Corporation (KESC) Tanzim Hussain Naqvi, Executive Director Pakistan Private Power & infrastructure Board Syed Hasan Nawab alongwith 15 British experts in the field of energy, engineering and banking were also present.

Sydney Lipworth said that British investors are satisfied with investment climate in Pakistan and have planned to make investment worth US $ 1.1 billion in petrochemical, communication and power projects.

He pointed out that British companies have thoroughly studied Pakistan's economic policies and are keenly interested in hydel power sector alongwith communication and energy related projects.

Chairman WAPDA Shamsul Mulk said that feasibility study of Ghazi Bharotha project has been completed in all its dimensions which speaks of its technical, environmental, and economic viability. He said that the project is ready for implementation as the design and tender documents have been completed.

Shamsul Mulk pointed that construction of the Ghazi Bharotha project would be completed in a period of around five years as the first unit would be commenced after 56 months of the award of the contract and the remaining each unit would come into operation with an interval of two months.

Pakistan wants UK investment in the field of thermal power generation, transmission and grid stations, said WAPDA chief, he continued that WAPDA is also intended to improve its funding situation in order to implement its water and power projects.

Chairman KESC S.T.H. Naqvi delivering his address pointed out that KESC would encourage private sector cooperation to boost power generation rehabilitation, expansion, transmission and distribution system. He said that in order to provide better service to the consumers improvement of 11 KV network is also needed.

Mr. Naqvi told the UK delegation that by the year 2000 KESC will have to purchase about 2,516 MWs power from the private sector in order to meet the gap between demand and supply. At present, he informed, KESC generating capacity is 1500 MWs and there is spinning reserve which compels the cooperation to resort to loadshedding if any unit is shut down for maintenance or in emergency.

He revealed that KESC is adding sixth of 210 MW power generating unit at Bin Qasim Thermal Power Station at Bin Qasim Thermal Power Station at a cost of Rs. 5 billion and this unit would become fully operational by July 1996.

He said that Power sector projects will only be established in private sector and WAPDA KESC has already initiated power purchase agreement of about 2,000 MWs with private sector.

Increased Cooperation Urged

BK2903094795 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 29 Mar 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Investment from UK"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Addressing a news conference, Deputy Chairman, National Westminster Bank and business leader of UK investment mission, Sir Sydney Lipworth said that Pakistan economy was expanding and the country was uniquely situated for attracting foreign investors. About the liberal economic policies for private investment, he said it was no doubt "an ideal policy" in view of the structuring of the documents which enabled foreign investors to know the risks involved as well as the terms and conditions of the projects here. Britain has been an active partner in foreign trade and investment in Pakistan. Indeed the UK is the second largest investor in our country. For quite some time the share of UK has been higher than that of other countries. However, with the passage of time the American interest in foreign private investment grew quickly and the US invested in many big joint-venture projects. It now dominates the annual direct investment flow which is around 50 per cent, followed by UK which is nearly 16 per cent. Major British companies with 86 projects as against 83 American projects, have been operating successfully over the years. At present the UK investors hold more than one-third of the total foreign investment.

On the eve of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's visit to Britain last November when UK's investment in Pakistan had totalled 2 billion dollars over the past 12 months, as compared to just a trickle four years ago, the British Sunday Telegraph in its report said: "Pakistan is one of the fastest growing emerging markets. Along with the United States and Japan, the UK is amongst the biggest investors in Pakistan". Similarly, the Financial Times opined: "Pakistan has opened its arms to overseas investment with some of the most liberal economic policies in South Asia, it has been rewarded with an inflow of foreign capital."

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The British investors have the distinct advantage of benefiting from the experience of their own companies in Pakistan. The success that the present Government has achieved in the management of the economy at macro-level and with incentives like full equity participation, hindrance-free repatriation of capital and profits and 'one-stop-shop' of the Board of Investment, the British investment has to come in. Talking to the visiting UK investment mission, President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said there were tremendous opportunities for foreign investment in Pakistan, particularly in the fields of communications and energy-related projects. He underscored the need for increased economic cooperation between Britain and Pakistan in joint ventures in the traditional and non-traditional areas, both by the public and private sectors. The visit of the UK mission has been quite fruitful and the scope of UK investment in Pakistan has significantly increased.

Government Raid on Kashmir Center Assailed

BK3003140395 Karachi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 30 Mar 95 p 10

[Editorial: "Raid on Kashmir Information Center—Attempt to Sabotage Kashmir Jihad"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In Islamabad the other day, secret agencies raided the office of the Jamaat-i-Islami Jammu Kashmir and took into custody Khalid Mahmud, deputy director of the Kashmir Information Center; they also seized important files from the office. The agencies searched the office for half an hour and later took the deputy director into custody and sent him to an undisclosed location. Condemning the raid, Jamaat-i-Islami Chief Qazi Hussain Ahmad has said that it is an operation to please the United States, and the Benazir Bhutto government is prepared to do anything in this country to satisfy the United States. In his words, the raid is tantamount to sabotaging the Kashmir freedom movement. Qazi Hussain Ahmad called on President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari and told him that, earlier, the Federal Investigation Agency had raided the office of the Kashmiri freedom fighters in Peshwar and had taken away four Kashmiri freedom fighters, and now the Kashmir Information Center office in Islamabad has been raided and its deputy director arrested. Condemning the raid on the Kashmir Information Center, Senator Chaudhary Shujat Hussain has said: Qazi Hussain Ahmad will now understand what the Pakistan People's Party government stands for.

Such action prior to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's visit to the United States will only be construed as showing that she wants to please the United States and give an impression to President Clinton that she is active in her efforts to rid the country of Islamic fundamentalists. Earlier, in an interview, she also appealed to the United States for help to confront the fundamentalists. Therefore, the raid on Kashmir Information Center will also be viewed from this perspective. One one side, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto claims that she is struggling to liberate Kashmir from India, but on the other, she is active in arresting those who are struggling for the independence of Kashmir. This sort of action by the prime minister might perhaps please the United States, but she will end up making Pakistan a country like Algeria, where the government is actively engaged in a fight against its own people to please the United States. In Algeria, Islamic parties came to power after winning elections. However, at the behest of the United States, the military junta has branded them as fundamentalists and is not willing to transfer power to them.

In principle, the United States, which advocates democracy, should have supported the Islamic parties, but it is sympathetic toward the military government, which is obstructing the path of the Islamic fundamentalists. Now, the question arises as to whether only Muslims are fundamentalists? Whether it is Kashmir or Algiers, Chechnya or Bosnia, everywhere Muslims are being deprived of their fundamental rights. We would like to appeal to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto not to hinder the way of the Kashmiris in their freedom struggle.

Sri Lanka

Preparations Under Way for Fourth Round of Talks

BK3003015395 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 29 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Preparations are being made for the fourth round of talks between the government and the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], sources in Colombo and Jaffna said. The date will be announced after President Chandrika Kumaratunga returns from her Bangladeshi visit. The situation is much more relaxed in Jaffna and its people are more concerned about shopping for the forthcoming new year, a Jaffna kachcheri [court] official said.

Military sources in Colombo said the cessation of hostilities is holding. There were no violations yesterday. In Jaffna, a journalist who was contacted on the telephone said they see signs of a return to hostilities. [sentence as heard] Even the LTTE cadres are relaxed. The goods are flowing more freely and prices have dropped, he said. Government sources said attention is now being paid to implementing the agreements already reached with the LTTE. They include ensuring a free flow of goods, taking off the embargo, and the appointment of a Northeast Development Authority to implement the area's 39 billion rupee reconstruction package. The government is working on the regulations to be agreed upon over the Northeast Development Authority to be set up, a government source said.

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LTTE Proposes 1 Apr Begin Date

BK3003120495 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] proposes to begin the fourth round of talks with the government on Saturday, the 1st [of April]. THE EELANATHAN newspaper published in Jaffna disclosed the LTTE decision. It is the official newspaper of the LTTE organization. THE EELANATHAN further said that the LTTE had replied President Chandrika Kumaratunga's letter stating their willingness to begin talks on that day. The third round of talks was held on the 14th of January between the government and the LTTE. Since then, the two parties have exchanged several letters. Priority was given in these letters the reconstruction (?in the north) and the removal of embargo on essential items to the north, which had adversely affected the day-to-day living of the Jaffna people. The government had earlier sent a letter to the LTTE seeking them to set a definite date for the fourth round of talks. Informed sources in Jaffna said the LTTE radio announced yesterday that they propose to begin talks on the 1st of next month.

LTTE Extends Deadline for Acceptance of Demands

BK2903143895 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0734 GMT 29 Mar 95

["Pool Item"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, 29 Mar—The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] on its Tiger radio this morning withdrew its insistence for the granting of its demands from the Sri Lankan Government which threatened to seriously think of calling off the cessation of hostilities declared on January 8 this year. The LTTE Voice of Tiger radio this morning extended the deadline to April 3rd.

Meanwhile, President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga has said she was willing to discuss the removal of night fishing ban in Jaffna borders and easing further the embargo on goods to Jaffna. It is also understood that if the LTTE pledges to give up its military operations against the Sri Lankan Government, the Sri Lankan Government is willing to consider the removal of the Pooneryn camp, which is a sticking point in the negotiations.

Political Proposals Drawn To End Ethnic Conflict

BK2503131895 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 25 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has drawn up political proposals to end the ethnic problem in the country. The minister of justice and constitutional affairs, Professor G.L. Peiris, told the weekly cabinet briefing yesterday that President Chandrika Kumaratunga had already informed the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] to set a date for negotiations.

The government is also ready to send the proposals to the LTTE in time for them to study this. The government has informed the LTTE that discussions could be held between the 2nd and 10th of April. The minister said that several proposals have been prepared on a permanent basis while some others were flexible. The government expresses the hope that political negotiations could be held soon and a compromise could be achieved in the near future.

Responding to queries raised by the media, he said that the so-called ultimatum given by the LTTE had been taken out of context. It was true that LTTE wanted a response from the government before 28th March in their letter dispatched on 17th. The reason was that the people in Jaffna are undergoing severe hardships due to their inability to get the essential items supposed to reach the North. The LTTE said in their letter that several essential items on which the embargo was lifted do not come through to Jaffna due to many administrative and logistic setbacks. They also wanted the embargo lifted on several more items.

Professor Peiris said that government would take necessary action to ensure that all items reach Jaffna on which an embargo had been lifted. The releasing of policemen and a soldier who were on hunger strike in Jaffna was a very positive response from the LTTE. The government did not request their release and it was a decision taken solely by the LTTE and it helps the peace process as relatives of the captives are very much at ease now. The stage is set to begin political discussions and the government is determined to go ahead with the peace process, he added.

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